

Greco-Roman Culture and the New Testament

Studies Commemorating
the Centennial of the
Pontifical Biblical Institute

SUPPLEMENTS TO NOVUM TESTAMENTUM 143

EDITED BY

*David E. Aune and
Frederick E. Brenk*

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CONTENTS

Preface	ix
List of Contributors	xiii
Introduction	1
<i>Frederick E. Brenk</i>	
The Role of Rhetorical Elaboration in the Formation of Mark's Passion Narrative (Mark 14:43–16:8): An Enquiry	11
<i>Justin Taylor, S.M.</i>	
<i>Logos and Pneuma in the Fourth Gospel</i>	27
<i>Troels Engberg-Pedersen</i>	
The Enigma of Imperial Cultic Activities and Paul in Corinth	49
<i>Bruce W. Winter</i>	
Pauline Paraenesis in Romans 12 and Greek Gnomic Wisdom	73
<i>Dieter Zeller</i>	
Most Beautiful and Divine: Graeco-Romans (especially Plutarch), and Paul, on Love and Marriage	87
<i>Frederick E. Brenk</i>	
Clement of Alexandria on Woman and Marriage in the Light of the New Testament Household Codes	113
<i>Gretchen J. Reydams-Schils</i>	
Traveling Up and Away: Journeys to the Upper and Outer Regions of the World	135
<i>Adela Yarbro Collins</i>	
The Polyvalent Imagery of Rev 3:20 in the Light of Greco-Egyptian Divination Texts	167
<i>David E. Aune</i>	

The Sibyl and the Apocalypses: Generic Relationships in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity	185
<i>John J. Collins</i>	
Index of Subjects	203
Index of Modern Authors	209
Index of New Testament Passages	215

PREFACE

This is the last of four volumes dedicated to the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Pontifical Biblical Institute.¹ The editors are not complete laggards but must apologize for the long delay in realizing the publication of this volume. A history of the Institute can be found in the large volume by Maurice Gilbert, entitled *The Pontifical Biblical Institute: A Century of History (1909–2009)*. He has also presented the material in shorter form for talks for the opening ceremonies of the anniversary and for the international meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Rome that year.² Since many readers may be unacquainted with the origin and role of the Institute, its history can be briefly summarized here. The original idea for the Institute was that of Leo XIII. He “wanted an institute of advanced biblical studies in Rome, which would answer the needs of the period of great archaeological and palaeontological discoveries and of the natural sciences, but which would also provide answers to that form of rationalism which advocated a minimalist understanding of scripture.”³ More simply put, Leo XIII was worried about the advances made by Protestants in the “scientific” study of the Bible (or *Bibelwissenschaft*) and the lack of competitive Catholic scholarship and institutions. Another worry of the Holy See, especially with Pius X, had to do with Catholic scholarship. It regarded Catholic scholars such as those at the École Biblique in Jerusalem as too *avant-garde*, for instance, in challenging the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Finally, there was the need to respond to rationalist attacks on the Bible.⁴ After Leo XIII died in 1903, Pius X resumed

¹ The others are Maurice Gilbert, *The Pontifical Biblical Institute: A Century of History (1909–2009)* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2009), published simultaneously in French, Italian, and English; Jean-Noël Aletti and Jean-Louis Ska (eds.), *Biblical Exegesis in Progress: Old and New Testament Essays (Analecta Biblica 176)* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2009); Agustinus Gianto (ed.), *Dum docemus, discimus: Ancient Near Eastern Essays in Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Pontifical Biblical Institute. Special Edition in Honor of the Centenary of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (= Orientalia 78 [2009.3])* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2009).

² The talk, “The Centenary of the Biblical Institute,” can be found online on the website of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, under “2009 International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature Celebrating the Centenary of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, June 30th to July 4th, 2009.”

³ Gilbert, “The Centenary of the Biblical Institute,” 1.

⁴ Gilbert, *The Pontifical Biblical Institute*, esp. 17–20.

the project, but it was delayed for lack of funds. The Holy See, which had been attracted by the work of the 43-year-old German, Leopold Fonck of the Society of Jesus, then entrusted him with founding the Institute. Fonck had an impressive *curriculum vitae* of five books and numerous articles and was, moreover, a staunch opponent of the famous Dominican, Marie-Joseph Lagrange, often considered to have been the greatest Biblical archaeologist.⁵ The Vatican purchased the small Muti Papazzurri palace in the center of Piazza della Pilotta, near the Trevi Fountain, which alone housed the Institute from 1909 until after the Second World War.⁶ However, through the Lateran Pact, the Convento of the Conventual Franciscan at Santi Apostoli, next door, had been restored to the Holy See. This building had been expropriated during the Risorgimento and occupied by the War Ministry for twenty-eight years and then by the Carabinieri. After the War, half of the Convento, including a *cortile* with a famous fountain by Domenico Fontana and commissioned by Sixtus V, was given to the Institute. A gracefully arched bridge was constructed to connect the new quarters with the Muti Papazzurri palace in the piazza.

According to Gilbert, the Institute in the first two decades was characterized by a distinctly anti-Modernist slant and by a heavy concentration on areas such as language, in part to avoid a potential source of problems with the Holy See. The "Biblicum" has actually two separate faculties, one for the study of the Old and New Testament, the "*Facoltà Biblica*," and another for the Ancient Near East, called the "*Facoltà Orientalistica*." The second faculty was due to the inspiration and influence of Augustin Bea. A professor at the Biblicum from 1924 on, he became its longest serving rector, occupying that post for nineteen years, from 1930 to 1949, and continuing his teaching until 1959, when he became a cardinal, famous for his role in the Second Vatican Council.⁷

The Near Eastern faculty was renowned from the start for its outstanding library and its journal, *Orientalia*, not to mention important works published as supplements or in series. The number of professors and students in this faculty has always been inferior to that in the Biblical faculty but has given enormous prestige to the Institute through its scholarly activities. It has also maintained close collaboration with Ancient Near Eastern scholars throughout the world. In its early years, the Institute

⁵ On Fonck, see Gilbert, *The Pontifical Biblical Institute*, 20.

⁶ Gilbert, *The Pontifical Biblical Institute*, 46–49.

⁷ Gilbert, *The Pontifical Biblical Institute*, 80–84.

carried on some important archaeological work at Ghassul and some, on a lesser scale, at Elephantine. These excavations were under the direction of the Jerusalem branch of the Institute, which opened in 1927, next to the King David Hotel.⁸

Attacks from ultra-conservative sources came in 1937–1941 by a Neapolitan priest and later under John XXIII, by a Monsignor Romeo and others. As a result, two of the most prominent professors of the Institute, Stanislas Lyonnet and Maximilian Zerwick, by an interdict of the Holy Office, were forbidden to teach, and other professors were under suspicion. However, due to the favorable climate of the Second Vatican Council toward Biblical studies and a more enlightened attitude, the storm not only blew over but also ushered in a flourishing period of growth. Though the Institute regarded its work as primarily exegetical and theological, Luis Alonso Schökel and Albert Vanhoye became pioneers in the literary study of the Bible. Alonso Schökel, in particular, had an enormous influence on the literary interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, and became the editor and major contributor to a complete Spanish translation of the Old and New Testament.⁹

In 1974 Carlo Maria Martini, later Cardinal, the rector of the Institute at the time, inaugurated a program of study in collaboration with professors at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Later, cooperation was established with the École Biblique and the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum there.¹⁰ Especially in recent times, the Institute has invited professors of many faiths and backgrounds to study, teach, or lecture at the Institute. Among them, many internationally known scholars have come from the Hebrew University and École Biblique in Jerusalem, but also from a large number of universities and countries throughout the world.

The Biblical Institute throughout its history has realized the importance of the study of the Graeco-Roman world toward an understanding of the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament. Until quite recently, the central place in the main *aula* of the library stacks was occupied by an enormous collection of massive volumes of Greek and Roman epigraphy and papyrology. For much of its history, it was simply assumed that both

⁸ Gilbert, *The Pontifical Biblical Institute*, 315–404, esp. 378–82 for the excavations at Teleilat Ghassul (Tulaylat al-Ghassul, etc.) near the mouth of the Jordan, and 433–441 for Ghassul (and Elephantine), and the controversies at a later date, largely resolved by Robert North (440–41).

⁹ Gilbert, "The Centenary of the Biblical Institute," 7.

¹⁰ Gilbert, *The Pontifical Biblical Institute*, 423–25.

professors and students would have behind them many years of Classical studies. One of the Institute's most famous professors, Édouard des Places, began his career with a doctorate in classical philology, followed by editions of Plato and the *Greek Anthology*, later the Middle and Neo-Platonists—thus becoming one of the leading Middle and Neo-Platonic scholars in the world—and finished by editing Eusebios and many Christian authors.¹¹ It seems very appropriate, then, to present these essays by a number of modern Biblical scholars, internationally known for their understanding of the Graeco-Roman world and the Old and New Testament, to an Institute, which has highly prized such labors.

¹¹ Between the age of 82 and 92, Des Places produced 10 editions of Christian authors, plus revising the text of Eusebios, and had sent off his "Chronique de la philosophie religieuse des Grecs," to the publisher just a few weeks before his death, at 100 years of age!

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INTRODUCTION

Frederick E. Brenk

The first article in this volume, by Justin Taylor, examines a segment of socio-rhetorical criticism of the New Testament. According to this theory, a classical writer could expand upon a saying or "*chreia*," according to rules which were laid down by ancient teachers of rhetoric. The writer could thus expand a number of *chreiai* ("useful" things or sayings) through some fictitious details, speeches, elaboration and the like, to arrive at a brief narrative. Taylor discusses the theory by Vernon K. Robbins that the elaboration of *chreiai* as found in Mark produced the Passion Narrative in Matthew. To quote Taylor:

On Robbins' hypothesis the "beliefs of early Christians about the death and resurrection of Jesus" that are expressed here in the form of predictions could be expressed in a brief narrative; this was subsequently expanded to produce the Passion narrative as we have it.

To test the theory, Taylor constructs a brief narrative using these principles. Like Robbins, he follows the writers of rhetorical and "*progymnasmata*" treatises. The latter were books on rhetoric intended for pupils before formally beginning the "*gymnasion*," that is, the higher level of secondary school. Taylor treats, in particular, the principles of rhetorical amplification found in Ailius Theon of Alexandria's *Progymnasmata*, a work roughly contemporary with the New Testament. Ailius, as a case study, applied his principles, using *chreiai* and small historical details, to create a short biography of the Boiotian hero Epaminondas. Following Ailius, Taylor constructs his own Passion narrative from *chreiai* and then compares it with that in Matthew. He next treats rhetorical expansion as developed by Hermogenes of Tarsos (born in 161 CE), who offered eight orderly steps or possible ways of expansion. Taylor admits that an evangelist could have known this procedure, and that in fact certain parts of the Gospels seem to have been based on it, for instance, Mark 8:32–38. Next, Taylor treats Quintilian's teaching on the addition of typical details. He ends with a discussion of the amplification of Biblical material by Jewish writers, in particular the story of Potiphar's wife as narrated in Philo and Josephus, by *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and by Louis Ginsberg in his

The Legends of the Jews. In conclusion, Taylor offers his judgment on the validity of Robbins' hypothesis about the origin of the Passion Narrative in Matthew.

Troels Engberg-Pedersen develops his argument, on the Stoic background of the *logos* in John, in a somewhat opposite direction to that of Taylor. Engberg-Pedersen is well known to Biblical scholars for works offering a positive evaluation of much Stoic doctrine and for relating it to New Testament ethics, especially as found in Paul.¹ In this contribution, which will certainly stir some controversy, he argues that the *logos* concept in the Gospel of John is heavily influenced by Stoic conceptions of two of its primary principles, *logos* and *pneuma*, which are closely related. He laments that Biblical scholars, ignoring the Stoics, have tried to understand the *logos* in John primarily through Old Testament texts and Jewish authors, or, that when they do introduce philosophy, it is Platonism. He argues, on the contrary, that since at the time the Gospels were written the predominant philosophy was still Stoicism, we should give a Stoic reading to the *logos* concept in John. He then proceeds to demonstrate, how, in his view, this offers a much more intelligible and convincing reading of the Prologue as well as other parts of John, such as the descent of the *pneuma* at the baptism of Jesus and the fullness of the *pneuma* which Jesus receives after his death.

For many Classical scholars the seeming conspiracy of silence in Acts about the Imperial Cult is a glaring void in the depiction of life in the cities which Paul visited. Bruce Winter attempts to determine the probable influence of the Imperial Cult on Paul's converts in Corinth. Some archaeological evidence remains at Corinth, but Winter's reconstruction also depends upon epigraphic and other remains from similar places. Thus, he studies first the evidence from Messene, a city in the province of Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital. This evidence involves the institution of "imperial cultic celebrations" inaugurated by a certain Publius Cornelius Scipio, a provincial official from Rome and *de facto* governor of the Province in the Augustan Age. His second piece of evidence involves celebrations in Achaia for the accession of the emperors Tiberius and

¹ See his *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) and *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). He is indebted to Johnny Christensen, *An Essay on the Unity of Stoic Philosophy* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962), and his student, Gitte Buch-Hansen, *It Is the Spirit That Makes Alive (6:63): A Stoic Understanding of pneûma in John* (PhD dissertations at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, 2007).

Gaius, which provide evidence that the original cultic activities under Augustus continued. Next, he examines the epigraphic, numismatic, and archaeological evidence from Corinth itself, to determine local cultic activity from its foundation as a Roman colony until a century afterwards. Finally, he attempts to judge the effect of this omnipresent cultic activity on the Corinthian Christians.

Winter observes that the introduction of “imperial cultic activity” was not a spontaneous gesture on the part of the local élite but rather driven by Roman officials. He notes here the role of Pontius Pilate at Caesarea Maritima in erecting a “Tiberieum,” which Winter takes to be a temple to Tiberius. In another Roman colony, Carthage, a proconsul named Quintus Marcius Barea dedicated a temple to Diva Augusta (that is, Livia, after her deification in 42). Other governors in Asia promoted imperial cults. On this basis, Winter questions the view that the powers of the proconsul were largely limited to exercising the *imperium* in criminal courts.

Winter offers an extremely detailed examination of a number of epigraphic dedications treating “imperial cultic activity”: the Messene inscription on the accession of Tiberius and Gaius; the rescript of Gaius to the Pan-Hellenic league of Achaians, Boiotians, Lokrians, Phokians, and Euboians; evidence from Asia and Pompeii; epigraphic dedications from Corinth itself regarding monuments and statues to the Imperial family; and coins minted there. He then discusses the effect of these ceremonies and sacrifices linked to the Imperial Cult on Christians at Corinth. Finally, he describes “the totally unexpected windfall” they received there, as narrated in Acts 18.

Dieter Zeller has chosen as his subject “*paraenesis*” (*parainesis*). Since the term is somewhat fluid, he defines it strictly as “a kind of moral advice, not triggered by specific situations, which treats a concrete subject in a concrete manner.” According to Zeller, the problem of “*paraenesis*” is one of the unresolved questions of New Testament research.” In order to clarify the matter, Zeller distinguishes four different genres in Greek gnomic or wisdom literature. For a starting point, he concentrates on that of the “Seven Sages” with which to compare the *paraeneses* in Romans 12. Zeller finds an Old Testament sapiential flavor in some of the New Testament sayings. However, others he finds to be based upon specifically Christian presuppositions and goals.

He continues by dividing the form of the Seven Sages wisdom into three types: short imperatives, short single maxims, and agglomerations of sayings of different grammatical structures. Zeller then attempts to characterize the sayings in Romans 12, checking them against the requirements

for the genre as specified in the Greek author Sosiades. At the end of this discussion, he indicates the difference between gnomic wisdom and New Testament paraenesis. He next treats *sophrosyne* as an ethical ideal common both to gnomic anthologies and to the New Testament. According to Zeller's demonstration, Paul abandons Greek ethical ideals and the value system both as expressed in the common wisdom of the Greeks and in Aristotle. His final discussion considers treatment of a fellow human being and, in particular, an adversary. Perhaps surprisingly in a culture which valued revenge on one's enemies, a number of counter-sayings involve returning evil with good. These are in general based on the principle of moderation, in the hope of turning an enemy into a friend, or the realization that a present enemy might be a future friend. He then considers nuances on such advice, especially regarding the motivation found in Romans 12. To conclude, he offers his opinion on how Paul modified Old Testament sapiential admonitions.

Frederick Brenk has chosen to examine some of the conceptions and goals of Greek and Roman marriage, so as to gain insights into Paul's teaching on the subject. To do so, he examines a number of works not so well known even to Classical scholars, among them, the "*On Eros*" literature produced by the philosophical schools, Musonius Rufus' and Seneca's teaching on marriage, and Plutarch's writings on love and marriage, such as the expositions found in the fragments of his works, his *Advice to a Bride and Groom*, and his *Dialogue on Love*. A number of famous Greek philosophers, such as Theophrastos, the Aristotelian, Chrysippos, the Stoic, and Epikouros (Epicurus), the founder of the Epicurean school, wrote treatises on love, or more specifically, on *eros*, giving them titles such as *Peri Erotos* (*On Love*), *Erotikos* (*A Treatise on Love*) or *Erotikos Logos* (*A Discourse on Love*). Their titles clearly indicated the nature of the love they intended to dissect. In contrast to this type of love, they spoke of another, *philia*, though this term could indicate mere friendship. This "*On Love*" literature tended to be highly negative and even physiological. Quite a bit of Theophrastos' ideas on love exist in fragments which were well known to later generations. Among the negative terminology used for love, we find such sayings as "an excess of an irrational desire," or "passion which holds one in thrall." Along with the treatise of Theophrastos came a number of examples of men, boys, and women, many of which seem to have floated through the literature for centuries. This negative approach apparently reached its zenith in a famous treatise by Epikouros, which was one of his most popular, but unfortunately no longer survives. Nonetheless, much of this material apparently was incorporated into his massive tome, *On*

Nature (*Peri Physeos*) and then transmitted by Lucretius in his *On Nature* (*De Rerum Natura*), which closely followed Epikouros' work. In both the Epicurean and Stoic schools, one of the goals was the transformation of erotic love into *philia*.

Another genre rather closely related to the "On Love" literature went under the rubric, "On Marriage" (*Peri Gamou*). Here the fundamental themes were closely related to the role of the married couple in society, such as the need for the generation of children and the family nucleus as the foundation of the state. Plutarch, however, in his *Advice to a Bride and Groom*, virtually ignored this approach, while at the same time stressing many traditional elements, such as the subordination of the wife to her husband. One might then deduce from the book that a successful marriage depends upon the bride supplying her husband's every desire. On the other hand, one scholar gives the work a feminist reading. The seemingly submissive bride through her superior "virtue" can be, and deserves to be, the dominant partner in the marriage. Thus, Plutarch's essay becomes a handbook on how a wife can manipulate and dominate her husband. Some aspects of *Advice to a Bride and Groom* suggest the influence of Musonius Rufus, especially in marriage as a partnership, stress on common sharing, and advocacy for the education of women. Reydam-Schils, in this volume, sees Musonius as mediating between tradition and innovation. While stressing the traditional moral goals of marriage, he introduces something like "women's liberation." Martha Nussbaum also extols some of the advances Musonius made, even if in her opinion it was "incomplete feminism."² There are important differences, however, in Brenk's view between Musonius and Plutarch, particularly as regards an eschatological dimension.

Some recent authors, such as Nussbaum and Rebecca Langlands stress the differences between ancient and modern approaches toward sexual behavior.³ Nussbaum sees a compulsion among ancient philosophers to moralize about *eros*.⁴ Langlands, on the other hand, outlines the high moral ideals of Roman marriage both in literature and in society at large,

² M.C. Nussbaum, "The Incomplete Feminism of Musonius Rufus, Platonist, Stoic, and Roman," in *The Sleep Of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome* (ed. M.C. Nussbaum and J. Sihvola; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 283–326.

³ Rebecca Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁴ Martha C. Nussbaum, "Eros and Ethical Norms: Philosophers Respond to a Cultural Dilemma," in *The Sleep Of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece*

while warning against a too monolithic view of Roman society. Chiara Torre notes the great innovation in Seneca: marriage becomes the starting point for perfecting oneself in virtue, the privileged place where the wife, as an active subject, can attain to wisdom.⁵ Kate Cooper, in a somewhat legalistic vein, dispenses with many modern misunderstandings about Roman marriage, such as the wife in marriage passing under the complete control of her husband.⁶

In the final part of the article, Brenk examines the thought of Paul on marriage, using the discussions of love and marriage in Graeco-Roman philosophy and society as a touchstone. Among the questions confronting one coming from the Graeco-Roman world are Paul's framing of the struggle against the flesh, and its parallels in Graeco-Roman thought; the basis for his advice on celibacy as parallel to that of Epikouros, and other philosophers both Greek and Roman; the new sacredness of marriage in the Pauline teaching; the role of the "Household Codes" and the dominance of the husband. In conclusion, Brenk notes common elements in the Graeco-Roman authors and in Paul, especially a religious meaning to marriage that transcends this life. Ultimately there is the question as to whether Paul's conception of marriage could easily be incorporated into the religious conceptions of Graeco-Romans, and whether in this respect, both Graeco-Roman philosophers and Paul were not stepping forth on untrod paths.

Changes in traditional attitudes and teaching about marriage occurred in the first century, and can be found, in particular, in the Stoics Musonius Rufus and the younger Seneca. In her essay in this volume, Gretchen Reydam-Schils notes a conflict in Clement of Alexandria between some of this teaching, which he knew, and that of Saint Paul, including the set of precepts known as the "Household Codes." In her analysis, Christian writers had developed a common *schema* which incorporated the ideals of non-Christian writers on the management of a household and corresponding passages in the Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Letters. Among the non-Christian Greek authors who were most influential in this area

and Rome (ed. M.C. Nussbaum and J. Sihvola; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 55–119.

⁵ Chiara Torre, *Il matrimonio del Sapiens: Ricerche sul De matrimonio di Seneca* (Genova: Università di Genova, Facoltà di lettere, Dipartimento di archeologia, filologia classica e loro tradizioni, 2000).

⁶ Kate Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

were Aristotle, Xenophon, Plutarch, and the Stoic Hierokles. Among the Romans, there were the Stoics Musonius Rufus and Seneca. Seneca, however, notes that within the Stoic school there was a debate over the usefulness of such precepts.

Gretchen Reydam-Schils has focused on the nature of the marital relationship in these authors and in Clement. Many *avant-garde* ideas can be found in Gaius Musonius Rufus, who lived in Rome but wrote in Greek and was influential enough to be banished first by Nero and then by Vespasian. His most famous pupil was the Stoic philosopher, Epiktetos, but another was Dion of Prousa (Dio Chrysostom or Dio Cocceianus), an important author of the Second Sophistic, and Musonius seems to have influenced Plutarch, who visited Rome. Antipatros of Tarsos, a second century Stoic, and Hierokles, held similar views to those of Musonius. Reydam-Schils notes that Clement reveals the clear influence of Musonius on other aspects of his teaching. She examines, then, whether he followed the groundbreaking innovations of the Stoics on marriage, or rather fell in with the teachings of the Household Codes, the Deutero-Pauline Epistles, and the Pastoral Letters.

She discovers in Clement a list of positive, shared features between men and women, such as their possessing one and the same virtue and receiving the same graces from the Church. Clement, however, creates something of a new list or alters the order of older ones. She then discovers a crucial nuance in the bond of marriage, strange opinions on the highest stage of life, and an extraordinary opinion on a woman's future after death. She thus is able to highlight important differences between the teaching of Musonius Rufus and Clement on the nature of the female body, the traditional division of labor, and the cardinal virtues. To this list can be added the relationship between husband and wife and the respective emotional maturity of the spouses. She examines the distinctively Christian teaching which Clement incorporated into Graeco-Roman views about marriage and the relative worth and duties of husband and wife. Particularly surprising is Clement's discussion about the Apostles and marriage. In the final section, she discusses what she believes is ultimately the key to Clement's views on women and marriage, and his relationship to Platonism and Neopythagoreanism. Finally, she discusses the apparent contradiction between two sets of Christian injunctions found in Clement's thought.

Adela Yarbro Collins offers a sweeping account of voyages to the *al-de-là* ("beyond"), or as she puts it "to the upper and outer regions of the world." She distinguishes two general types, the ascent outside of death or instead

of death, with the person remaining in heaven, and a second type during the traveler's lifetime in which he returns home after visiting or touring heaven or the ends of the earth. She begins with discussion of the work of Wilhelm Bousset, whose 1901 articles attributed the major influence to Iranian literature.⁷ He also identified an Iranian tradition of three heavens and over these, Paradise, where the throne of God was found. In contrast, Carsten Colpe attributed the phenomenon of ascent to Shamanism, while Ioan Culianu traced it to Babylonian tradition. Yarbrow then develops a number of types: (1) ecstatic journeys of shamans, (2) ascents of kings (Old Akkadian cylinder seals, legends of Romulus), (3) ascents as problems regarding immortality and the like (Amarna tablets, Ashurbanipal library [Adapa, Gilgamesh]), (4) ascents of cultural heroes (including Paul in 2 Corinthians 12), (4a) legitimation of the hero, meditation, and intercession (1 *Enoch* 12–14), (4b) ascents to obtain revelation (*Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Ascension of Isaiah*), (4c) ascents as a foretaste of permanent ascent (1 *Enoch*), (4d) final or permanent ascent to a heavenly, god-like existence (2 *Enoch*, Moses in Josephus, Herakles myth, Peregrinus in Lucian), (4e) the ambiguity and danger of ascents (*Mishnah*), (4f) self-presentation as such, a divinely inspired cultural hero or wise man (Parmenides), (5) ascents of magicians and other religious specialists, (5a) initiation and deification or immortalization (mystery cults), (5b) divinization (Mithraism), (6) ascent to immortality as a possibility for everyone, 6a. visit to heaven as an educational experience (Qumran), Cicero, "Dream of Scipio", (6b) final or permanent ascent at death (*Poimandres*), 6c. journey of the soul after death to various parts of the cosmos (Plato's *Republic*, story of Er, Plutarch's *On the Delays of the Divine Justice*, story of Aridaïos, *The Daimonion of Socrates*, story of Timarchos), 6d. the souls of the good ascend after death (Plutarch, *The Face on the Moon*). In each of these sections, Yarbrow goes into a detailed description of the ascents. In her conclusions, she discusses alternate ways of organizing the material, and how different purposes affect different works, illustrating her points by a number of examples.

David Aune attempts to examine the polyvalent imagery of Revelation 3:20—Christ standing and knocking at the door—in the light of Graeco-Egyptian divination texts. The New Testament verse is perplexing due

⁷ W. Bousset, "Die Himmelsreise der Seele," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 4 (1901) 136–69, 229–73.

to the grammatical shift in persons, and to an “I saying,” something rare in Revelation, though somewhat more frequent in the Gospels. Though granted by all that the scene is allegorical, interpretations differ. For instance, some see Biblical allusions such as to the Song of Songs, the parable of the returning master, and admonitions of John regarding those who love Jesus. Another line of interpretation is eschatological or as a reference to a present coming of Jesus. Aune then turns to the second part of the verse, Jesus’ dining with the host. Here he again finds a great diversity of interpretations: as a metaphor for intimacy, as a reference to the Lord’s Supper, or as an allusion to an eschatological, messianic banquet, or simply a reference to table fellowship as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

Aune then tests the various hypotheses, beginning with the Eucharistic one, possibly the oldest. As to the purpose of the saying, he discusses nineteenth and twentieth century scholarly interpretations, such as a summons to conversion or repentance, an interpretation that can already be found in Andreas of Caesarea, 563–637 CE, a Greek theological writer and bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. The most common modern interpretation, though, is that of Jesus seeking entry into the human heart. Here Aune discusses the famous sentimental rendering of the scene by the English artist, William Holman Hunt between 1851 and 1853, now in the chapel of Keble College, Oxford. Aune also discusses the version of the extremely popular American artist, Warner Sallman (1892–1968).

Aune now turns his attention to the central focus of his article, Graeco-Egyptian cultic meal and divination texts for understanding the verse. He discusses two types as relevant to the text in Revelation. One concerns an invitation to attend a dinner with the god Sarapis, a formula which exists in thirteen copies. The second refers to a sacred meal meant to “attract and establish a perpetual bond with a *paredros daimon*,” which Aune translates as “an assistant god.” He discusses the nature of these two banquets, that of a *paredros daimon*, the focus of these meals, and the implications of them for understanding Revelation 3:20. In his conclusion, Aune explains his reasons for rejecting the traditional interpretations and for accepting the interpretation based on the divination texts, and discusses the implications for the Christian worshiper.

John Collins attempts to tackle the relationship between the *Sibylline Oracles* and apocalypses. He notes that some scholars reject off-hand the idea that the *Sibylline Oracles* were apocalypses, but he notes a striking similarity. During the course of his article, Collins tests some of the

recent hypotheses of Jane Lightfoot and Rieuwerd Buitenwerf in their recent books on the *Sibylline Oracles*.⁸ Lightfoot argued that the *Sibylline Oracles*, especially the *Third Oracle*, could be illuminated by John Barton's study of the transformation of prophecy in the Second Temple period.⁹ This may have been a way of circumventing the belief that the age of prophecy had passed, but it also had implications for the nature of prophecy. Buitenwerf's book had largely to do with dividing the *Third Oracle* into different sections and noting the characteristics of each. According to Collins, the most conspicuous differences between Jewish *Sibylline Oracles* and pagan ones are the lengthy exhortations introduced into the Sibyl's mouth and the framework of universal history. Along with others, Collins regards the core and oldest material of the *Sibylline Oracles* as that found in the *Third Sibylline Oracle*, verses 350–488. He notes a similarity to apocalypses in the Sibyl's ability to plot the whole course of history, though in her prophecy we lack any suggestion of an apocalyptic finale with cosmic judgment or resurrection of the dead. Collins suggests the possibility that the Sibyllists of the second century BCE knew the Book of Daniel, even if not following its sequence of world events. He then discusses the origin of this sequence and differences between the *Third Sibylline Oracle* and the Book of Daniel. In treating the *Fourth Sibylline Oracle*, he notes its peculiar characteristics and succession of kingdoms. He is also intrigued by the "*ultima aetas*" of the Cumaean Sibyl in Vergil's *Fourth Eclogue*. He discusses, after this, the possibility of a Persian source for the final conflagration and resurrection in apocalypses. He now returns to the First and Second *Oracles*, treated by Lightfoot and notes his disagreement with, or doubts about, some of her assertions. In his conclusion he offers his final judgment on whether the *Sibylline Oracles* were modeled on apocalypses, the relation of the *Oracles'* description of successive kingdoms to those in the *Book of Daniel*, the significance of the *Oracles* being written in Greek, and the creativity both of the apocalyptic and *Sibylline* authors.

⁸ Jane L. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles, with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on the First and Second Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and its Social Setting* (SVTP 17; Leiden: Brill, 2003).

⁹ Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 60. Cf. J. Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

THE ROLE OF RHETORICAL ELABORATION IN THE FORMATION OF MARK'S PASSION NARRATIVE (MARK 14:43–16:8): AN ENQUIRY¹

Justin Taylor, S.M.

The last twenty-to-thirty years have seen the vast development of socio-rhetorical interpretation of the New Testament and other literature. This is a multi-disciplinary approach, combining rhetorical and social criticism of texts. Vernon K. Robbins, the initiator of the method, thus explains its origin and development in an essay posted on his web page:²

Socio-rhetorical interpretation began in the 1970s with an attempt to explain special characteristics of language in the accounts of voyaging on the sea in Acts and Jesus' calling, gathering, teaching and sending out of disciples in the Gospels. In both instances, the goal was to understand the language of New Testament literature in the context of Mediterranean literature, both religious and non-religious. Also, the goal was to understand the use of language in relation to social, cultural, ideological and religious environments and relationships in the Mediterranean world. During the 1980s, the rhetorical treatises entitled *Progymnasmata* (Preliminary Exercises) played a major role in the interpretation of abbreviation, expansion, addition, rebuttal, commendation and elaboration in biblical and Mediterranean literature before and during the time of the emergence of early Christianity. During the 1990s, socio-rhetorical interpretation identified multiple textures of texts for the purpose of reading and re-reading them in ways that activated a wide range of literary, rhetorical, historical, social, cultural, ideological and religions [sic!] 'webs of signification' in text...

¹ This essay is a revised version of a paper discussed in the joint seminar on the New Testament conducted by the École Biblique and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of Comparative Religion. I have great pleasure in dedicating it to honour and celebrate the centenary of the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

² Vernon K. Robbins, "Beginnings and Developments in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation," 2004, p. 43 (www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/Pdfs/SRIBegDevRRA.pdf). See by the same author, "Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition and Pre-Gospel Traditions: A New Approach," in: C. Focant (ed.), *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (BETL 110; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1993) 111–147; *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1996); *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996); "Narrative in Ancient Rhetoric and Rhetoric in Ancient Narrative," in: *Society of Biblical Literature 1996 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996) 368–384.

ROBBINS' ARGUMENT

In *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, published in 1996, Robbins argued that "Mark 15–16 presents narrative amplification of beliefs of early Christians about the death and resurrection of Jesus."³ Specifically, "(T)he Gospel of Mark repetitively puts early Christian belief in the death and resurrection on the lips of Jesus in the form of *chreiai*." These *chreiai* are to be found in the form of a threefold and progressive prediction in Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34.⁴ In its first and simplest form, this prediction is expressed in indirect speech and runs (8:31):

Then he began to teach them that the Son of man was destined to suffer grievously, and to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be put to death, and after three days to rise again.⁵

As Robbins points out, "[t]his *chreia* on the lips of Jesus makes no reference either to burial or to appearance after resurrection." In Mark 8:31—and indeed in all its forms—it "presents Jesus as a passive victim throughout his suffering, rejection and death. But Jesus becomes active on the third day when he 'rises up'."

The second version is expressed in direct speech; it is slightly briefer but adds the explicit note of being "delivered" or handed (9:31):

He was telling them: "The Son of man will be delivered into the power of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again."

The last and fullest form of the prediction runs (10:32–34):

Once more taking the Twelve aside he began to tell them what was going to happen to him, "Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man is about to be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the gentiles, who will mock

³ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 51–52.

⁴ See Georg Strecker, "The Passion- and Resurrection Predictions in Mark's Gospel (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34)," *Interpretation* 22 (1968) 421–442, who holds that the prediction of Mark 8:31 goes back to pre-Markan tradition, but not to the "historical Jesus." On the other hand, Jesus' prediction of his Passion could express his own presentiment of what lay ahead of him (perhaps influenced in its formulation in the Gospels by knowledge of what in fact befell); see the judicious discussion by W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. II (The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991) 659–661.

⁵ Scriptural translations from *The New Jerusalem Bible*.

him and spit at him and scourge him and put him to death; and after three days he will rise again.”

On Robbins’ hypothesis, the “beliefs of early Christians about the death and resurrection of Jesus” that are expressed here in the form of predictions could be expressed in a brief narrative; this was subsequently expanded to produce the Passion narrative as we have it. Let us first construct such a brief narrative corresponding in content to the final form of the prediction quoted above; it might have run more or less as follows:

Jesus went up to Jerusalem, where he was handed over to the chief priests and scribes. They condemned him to death and handed him over to the gentiles, who mocked him and spat at him and scourged him and put him to death; and after three days he rose again.

Robbins points out that in Mark’s Passion narrative, Jesus is indeed *handed over* by Judas to emissaries of the *chief priests, scribes* and elders (14:43–46);⁶ by them is *condemned to death* (14:64) and *handed over* to Pilate (15:1) and by him *handed over* to the soldiers (15:15).⁷ These *gentiles mock* him (15:16–19), *spit on him* (15:19), *scourge* him (15:15) and finally *put him to death* (15:33–39). In 16:7 the young man in the tomb tells the women that Jesus has *risen*. “With this,” remarks Robbins, “the story ends, because with this episode Markan discourse has fully enacted the *chreia* as amplified narrative.”⁸ It is not merely quibbling to ask, all the same, where the “Markan discourse” got the role of Judas, since the *chreia* does not mention, even implicitly, the various roles played by the disciples, notably Judas and Peter. Similarly, if the *chreia* does not mention Jesus’ burial, we may be somewhat surprised to find this event in the amplified narrative, not to speak of the discovery of the empty tomb. In fact, someone simply amplifying Mark 8:31, etc., could have restated or expanded “on the third day he will rise again” without making any reference to his burial or to a tomb.

Obviously, similar arguments to those that Robbins invokes here could be applied to any of the extended narratives of the Gospels, namely that they originate in a rhetorical amplification, following well-known rules and models, of a *chreia* or other succinct statement of tradition, such as those received and handed on by Paul concerning Jesus’ Last Supper or

⁶ In fact, then, the narrative that Robbins’ claims is developed from Mark 8:31, etc., begins, not at 15:1 but at 14:43.

⁷ The verb *παράδιδωμι* recurs like a drum beat.

⁸ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 51.

his death, burial, resurrection and post-resurrection appearances (cf. 1 Cor 11:23–26; 15:3–7).

RHETORICAL AMPLIFICATION: AELIUS THEON

Let us test Robbins' theory by referring to Aelius Theon of Alexandria's *Progymnasmata*, a rhetorical textbook that was roughly contemporary with the New Testament.⁹ Robbins himself makes extensive use of this work, for example in his article, "Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition and Pre-Gospel Traditions." Theon deals with the *chreia* at 96.18–106.¹⁰ It is an anecdote, which is frequently "useful" (whence the term *χρεία*, "useful"), and which reports a brief and pointed statement or action that is attributed to a named person.¹¹ In the course of his discussion, Theon shows his pupils the many different things they can do with a *chreia*, including how to expand it (103.30–104.16). This is done by developing the questions and answers, also the "action and the passion"¹² that it may contain." A little later, he will give similar advice concerning a "fable" (*μῦθος*), which is a fictitious story that imitates reality and can serve as an example: a fable is expanded by developing the passages in direct speech or by describing a river or the like (75.17–19). Theon also treats at length the "narration" (*διήγημα*) proper, defined as a "discourse expounding facts that are real or are given as such" (78.15–96.15). When he comes to deal with the expansion of a narrative (85.30–32), he simply refers back to what he has previously had to say about the expansion of the fable (and implicitly the *chreia*). All of this is rather general and does not convey much to the modern reader, who might be encouraged to think that Theon would allow the free flight of fancy in the expansion of a *chreia* or similar brief narrative.

We get a better idea of what is involved from the example Theon gives of an expanded *chreia*. First he recites the following brief anecdote:

⁹ Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata* (Greek text and French translation by Michel Patillon and Giancarlo Bolognesi [Collection Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1997]); the editors (viii–xvi) opt for a dating in the first half of the 1st century CE, but allow that others prefer the early 2nd century.

¹⁰ In the edition cited, 18–30.

¹¹ In fact, only Mark 8:31 conforms perfectly to the structure of the *chreia*, which is not only brief but also groups all its components into a single syntactical system; the other two forms of the prediction, which are slightly more developed and do not have this syntactical unity, are closer to the "reminiscence"; compare Patillon and Bolognesi, in the introduction to their edition of Theon, lviii.

¹² That is, what a subject does or undergoes.

"Epaminondas, who was about to die childless, said to his friends: 'I leave two daughters, the victory at Leuctra, and that at Mantinea.'" This is expanded to produce the following longer narrative:¹³

Epaminondas, the Theban general, had already shown his valour in peacetime; and when his country went to war with Sparta, he gave many shining examples of his magnanimity. After vanquishing the enemy at Leuctra as Boeotarch, he fought for his country as a common soldier at Mantinea, where he died. While he lay wounded and dying and his friends grieved over his misfortune, and especially for the fact that he was dying childless, he said with a smile: "Dry your tears, my friends. I leave you two immortal daughters, two victories of our country over Sparta, Leuctra the elder, and her newborn younger sister, Mantinea."

It is clear that expansion here involves: providing information about Epaminondas known from elsewhere—he was a Theban general, led his country in the war with Sparta, winning the victory at Leuctra, and died as a common soldier on the field of Mantinea; adding details implied by the brief narrative or at least plausibly included in it—Epaminondas has been mortally wounded, his friends bewail his fate; adding a further detail, namely his smile, that is purely imaginary but fitting; and by amplifying his speech, including making explicit what is implicit in the brief statement. The result is not, however, comparable with the narrative of Mark 14:43–16:8, either in scale or in content. For, whereas the longer narrative concerning Epaminondas is recognizably an expanded version of the original *chreia*, the same cannot be said of Mark 14:43–16:8, which is far from being simply an expanded version of 10:32–34—even if we allow a very generous understanding of "expansion": many incidents and episodes, not to speak of dialogue and direct discourse, in the Passion narrative are not contained even implicitly in the prediction.¹⁴

In fact, an expansion of Mark 10:32–34—or rather, of the narrative corresponding to it—following the rules and examples laid down by Aelius Theon would result in a story not dissimilar to that told to the unrecognized stranger by the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:19–24. This is how a "neutral" writer (say, Flavius Josephus) might have handled it,

¹³ Translations (other than Scriptural) are my own, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁴ In fact, Mark 10:32–34 can well be regarded as an amplification of 8:31; thus Strecker, "The Passion- and Resurrection Predictions in Mark's Gospel," 434: "In this passage it is noteworthy that the statement on the suffering is amplified in the form of an excursus which sums up the essential elements of the passion." Strecker here supposes a procedure that is the opposite of that supposed by Robbins, namely that the evangelist has summarized the known facts of Jesus' passion in order to amplify 8:31 into 10:32–34.

by adding elements easily known or supposed from elsewhere or implicit in the *chreia*, also plausible motives:

Jesus the Nazarene showed himself a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and the whole people. Many hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free. For that reason he was arrested in Jerusalem before Passover and *handed over to the chief priests and the scribes*, who feared an insurrection and *decided that he had to die*. They in turn *handed him over to the gentiles* who ruled the country at the time. The Roman governor Pilate sentenced him to death as a danger to public order. The soldiers took him away, *mocked him, spat at him and scourged him*. Then they led him carrying the instrument of his punishment to the place of execution, where they crucified him. But *after three days* there were reports that *he had risen again*.

The supposed original narrative could also have been amplified by the addition of suitable speeches. Indeed, those educated in the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition would have expected a speech by Jesus at his trial protesting his innocence or before his execution declaring his readiness to die—both Socrates, according to Plato's *Apology*, and the Jewish martyr Eleazar (2 Macc 6:18–31) furnished notable examples.¹⁵ On the contrary, the silence of Jesus before his accusers and judges is remarked by all four evangelists (Matt 26:63; Mark 14:61; Luke 22:9; John 19:9). As Robbins points out, Jesus' silence is particularly notable in Mark: he has more to say according to Matthew and Luke, and especially John.¹⁶ By contrast, the apostle Andrew, in his non-canonical *Acts*, makes a speech from his cross that lasts three days and three nights.¹⁷

In any case, the narrative thus expanded is still a long way from those of the canonical Gospels. Those elements in the Passion narrative that cannot be simply explicated from the *chreia* must have originated elsewhere. Some of these elements, for example the name of the Roman governor who condemned Jesus, would have been easily known—perhaps too the fact that Jesus was put to death just before Passover. That he died by crucifixion is already implicit in the fact that he died at the hand of the gentiles and in any case was central to the Christian story. Certain details

¹⁵ On the contrast between the Gospel Passion narratives and Hellenistic (including Jewish) representations of the "noble death," see Adela Yarbro Collins, "From Noble Death to Crucified Messiah," *New Testament Studies* 40 (1994) 481–503, especially 482–486.

¹⁶ *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 52, where Robbins regards this feature as an amplified form of Jesus' "passivity" in the threefold prediction *chreia*.

¹⁷ Jean-Marc Prieur and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "The Acts of Andrew," in: Wilhelm Schneemelcher (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha*, rev. by Edgar Hennecke, trans. and ed. by R. McL. Wilson (2 vols.; Cambridge: James Clark; Louisville: Westminster, John Knox, 2003) 2.101–151.

of the process of crucifixion were notorious and could be presumed to have happened. But that still does not account for many other elements of the Gospel narrative.

THE USE OF PSALM 22

Robbins himself seems to acknowledge something of the sort. For he argues further that part of the process of the narrative amplification of Mark 10:32–34 consists in the “recontextualisation” of passages from Ps. 22 (LXX 21).¹⁸ Thus, he claims, the recontextualization of v. 19 of the psalm (“They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing”) in Mark 15:24 gives rise to the scene in which those who crucify Jesus divide his garments among them. Similarly, the recontextualization of v. 7–9, “in the form of an ‘expansion composition,’” produces the threefold mocking of Jesus in Mark 15:29–32. Finally, Mark 15:33–39 recontextualizes the opening verse of the psalm, in a cry that is misinterpreted by bystanders, but turns out to convey Jesus’ last words. Robbins concludes: “These oral-scribal activities in the context of other narration and attribution of speech create a narrative that is an extended amplification of the brief chreiai in chapters 8, 9 and 10 of Mark.” Let us test first two examples of Mark’s alleged recontextualization of the psalm—the quotation of verse 1 is obvious.

From comparison with the LXX, it is clear that Mark has indeed used Ps 22:19 in composing 15:24 (similarly Matt 27:35 and Luke 23:34—the Nestle-Aland Greek text uses italics indicating the implicit quotation). In John 19:23–24, the episode is more developed, including a brief speech, and the psalm verse is explicitly cited, introduced by the clause: “In this way the words of scripture were fulfilled...” However, it is one thing to cite Scripture implicitly or explicitly in composing a narrative, with the claim—again implicitly or explicitly—that the episode fulfils a prophecy. It is quite another thing to compose a narrative entirely out of the scriptural passage in the absence of any pre-Gospel tradition to the effect that the soldiers shared out Jesus’ clothes among them. Such a procedure is not

¹⁸ *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 48–50, 52; see also his article, “The Reversed Contextualization of Psalm 22 in the Markan Crucifixion: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis,” in: F. van Segbroeck *et al.* (eds.), *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, (2 vols.; BETL 100; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1992) 2.1161–1183, 1175–1181. There he points out that Mark quotes or refers to verses of the psalm in the reverse order from that in which they appear there, thereby, he holds, “subverting the rhetoric” of the psalm, which ends in an expression of confidence.

intrinsically impossible. But to assert that it happened here seems to be gratuitous. For it is at least equally, or even more plausible to suppose that the episode did in fact occur—at this period the clothes of condemned prisoners were regularly taken as “spoils”¹⁹—and was “read” as a fulfilment of the psalm verse.

As we have mentioned, Robbins claims that in 15:29–32, Mark uses the Greek text of Ps 22:8–9 to create a three-step scene of mockery of Jesus on the cross: “All who see me jeer at me, they sneer and wag their heads, ‘He trusted himself to Yahweh, let Yahweh set him free! Let him deliver him, as he took such delight in him’.” Thus, he believes, the “all who see me” of the psalm becomes first the passers-by, then the chief priests and scribes, finally the two thieves crucified with Jesus. We will concede that there are parallels of sense and even of vocabulary between the psalm passage and the Markan narrative: “wagging their heads”; “save yourself”; “he cannot save himself.” In fact, the parallels are almost as close as those with the Greek text of Ps 109:25 (“I have become the butt of their taunts, they shake their heads at the sight of me”), and even closer in one detail: “I have become the butt of their taunts (ὄνειδος)” is echoed in Mark 15:32, “Even those who were crucified with him taunted (ὠνεῖζων) him.” Once again, however, such use of Scripture to tell his story does not mean that Mark has created the episode out of the psalm.

RHETORICAL AMPLIFICATION: HERMOGENES

Other ancient textbook writers dealt with the *chreia*, and some gave rules for its expansion.²⁰ So Hermogenes of Tarsus (b. 161 CE) offers a pattern in eight steps for the amplification (ἐργασία) of a simple *chreia* into an elaborate speech.²¹ There is reason for thinking that he may here be following

¹⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah, from Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York, London, et al.: Doubleday, 1994) 2.955.

²⁰ For the texts and translations, with introductions and notes, of the discussions of the *chreia*, not only by Theon but also by Quintilian, Hermogenes of Tarsus, Priscian, Aphthonius of Antioch, Nicolaus of Myra and the “Vatican Grammarian,” see Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O’Neil (eds.), *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*. Vol. I. *The Progymnasmata* (SBL Texts and Translations 27, Graeco-Roman Religion Series 9; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1986); further, on the use of the *chreia* in ancient education, see Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O’Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric: Classroom Exercises* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 2; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

²¹ See Burton L. Mack and Edward N. O’Neil, “The Chreia Discussion of *Hermogenes of Tarsus*: Introduction, Translation and Comments,” in: Hock and O’Neil, *The Chreia*

an older tradition, which is not taken up by Theon;²² in that case, the Gospel writers could have known the pattern. The eight steps as given by Hermogenes are as follows:

1. to begin with an *encomium* in praise of the person to whom the *chreia* is attributed;
2. then to give a paraphrase of the *chreia*;
3. this is followed by a reason for the statement or action that is the subject of the *chreia*;
4. at this stage comes a statement from the opposite ("but on the contrary...");
5. then a statement from analogy ("for just as...");
6. next a statement from example ("indeed this is what X used to say or do");
7. here one may add a statement from authority (e.g. "as Homer writes...");
8. finally, an exhortation to pay attention to what has been said or done.

Hermogenes takes the example of the *chreia*: "Isocrates said that education's root is bitter, but its fruit is sweet," and develops it into the following discourse:

Isocrates was a wise man. He said that the root of education is bitter to the taste but its fruit is delightful.²³ For the most important affairs tend to succeed because of hard work, but once they have succeeded they bring pleasure. By contrast, ordinary affairs do not require one to take trouble and the result is not pleasurable, whereas serious matters have the opposite outcome. Just as farmers gather their fruits after working the land, so too those working with words reap their rewards after hard labour. Take the example of Demosthenes, who shut himself in his room and worked long and hard: later he reaped the fruits of toil in the form of wreaths and acclamations. The great poet Hesiod said: "The gods have ordained that sweat comes before excellence"; and another poet [Epicharmus] wrote: "The gods

in *Ancient Rhetoric, I. The Progymnasmata*, 153–181. A similar "second-level" scheme of elaboration in seven stages is explained in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (composed around 86 BCE) 4.43–54–44–57; Latin text and English translation by H. Caplan, [Cicero], *Ad C. Herennium* (Loeb Classical Library, 403; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954/1989) 370–375; reproduced in Robbins, "Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition and Pre-Gospel Traditions," 126–127.

²² Thus Mack and O'Neil, "The Chreia Discussion of *Hermogenes of Tarsus*," 161–162.

²³ In fact, Hermogenes does not bother to give a paraphrase, so I have added one.

sell us every good thing at the price of toil." All this should be laid to heart and put into practice.

Being a textbook example this is jejune. A real speech would be much more elaborate; also the orator would be allowed some freedom in his deployment of the eight steps. A much longer and fuller expansion of the same *chreia*, still in eight steps, is given by Libanius (314–393 CE). At the same time, it should be noted that this longer expansion simply increases the scale, as it were, of the amplification; it does not add substantially new material.²⁴ Later writers into the Byzantine period follow the same educational tradition and give similar instructions with similar examples.

As we have noted, the evangelists could have known this procedure. Indeed a number of passages in the Gospels seem to have been composed in accordance with it.²⁵ One might even argue that Mark 8:32–38 represents a development of the *chreia* of v. 31, in which some, though not all, of the steps prescribed by Hermogenes can be identified (an *encomium* of Jesus is not needed here):

1. The original *chreia* (which is repeated in variant forms at 9:30–32 and 10:32–34): "Then he began to teach them that the Son of man was destined to suffer grievously, and to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be put to death, and after three days to rise again; and he said all this quite openly."
2. A second *chreia*, which is here dependent on the first and functions as an argument from the opposite: "Then, taking him aside, Peter tried to rebuke him. But, turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said to him, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are thinking not as God thinks, but as human beings do.'"²⁶ (In other words, "On the contrary, anyone who says otherwise is thinking not as God thinks, but as human beings do.")
3. A third statement, which broadens the scope of the teaching and to which the first functions as an implicit example; it could also have been reproduced as a free-standing *chreia*: "He called the people and his

²⁴ Greek text with English translation in Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric*, 168–187.

²⁵ Besides the examples proposed by Robbins, see recently Thomas D. Stegman, S.J., "Reading Luke 12:13–34 as an Elaboration of a Chreia: How Hermogenes of Tarsus Sheds Light on Luke's Gospel," *Novum Testamentum* 49 (2007) 328–352.

²⁶ If this second *chreia* were reproduced independently, it would have something like this form: "To Peter, who rebuked him for predicting his own suffering, rejection and death, Jesus replied: 'Get behind me, Satan! [etc.]'."

disciples to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.'" (Implicitly, "If you want to follow me, you will follow my example in taking up my cross.")

4. A reason for this saying: "Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."
5. No argument from analogy ("just as . . .") is given here; Jesus does, however, give one in John 12:23b–24: "In truth I tell you, unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest."²⁷
6. A conclusion: "What gain, then, is it for anyone to win the whole world and forfeit his life?"
7. A reason for this statement reinforcing it: "And indeed what can anyone offer in exchange for his life?"
8. An exhortation to pay heed: "For if anyone in this sinful and adulterous generation is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Whatever the merits of this analysis of Mark 8:31–38—and it is not the purpose of this essay to argue them—it is obvious that the result of amplifying Mark 8:31 according to the model of Hermogenes,²⁸ is nothing like Mark 14:43–16:8. Furthermore, no ancient literary theorist seems to give any instructions for the development of a *chreia* into a complex narrative comparable to the Gospel accounts of the Passion.

THE ADDITION OF TYPICAL DETAILS: QUINTILIAN

The Roman rhetor Quintilian (c. 30–100 CE) discusses the *chreia* in his *Institutiones oratoriae* (1.9.1–1.10.1),²⁹ but gives no instruction on its

²⁷ This is followed immediately by v. 25: "Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

²⁸ In fact, someone amplifying Mark 8:31 strictly according to the rules given by Hermogenes would not have introduced two further statements in direct speech, but would have paraphrased them in the manner I have indicated.

²⁹ For the Latin text and English translation with introduction and notes, see Edward N. O'Neil, "Discussion of Preliminary Exercises of *Marcus Fabius Quintilianus*: Introduction, Translation and Comments," in: Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric, I. The Progymnasmata*, 113–151.

amplification. Later in his treatise, however, he allows the orator to expand a brief narrative when this is required, even by adding fictitious material (8.3.67–70).³⁰ Thus, the laconic statement that a city was sacked contains in a nutshell all the circumstances that normally go with such an event: buildings on fire, roofs falling in, panicking crowds, pillage and plunder, prisoners being taken. But only when these details are spelled out, can readers or hearers have a concrete picture before their eyes and grasp emotionally the terror of the scene. For that reason, he says, “we shall secure the vividness we seek, if only our descriptions give the impression of truth [*verisimilia*], nay, we may even add fictitious incidents of the type which commonly occur [*et licebit etiam falso adfingere quidquid fieri solet*].”

So, at least for Quintilian, fictitious elements may be introduced into the narrative in order to amplify it; but the examples he gives are what one might call typical details, which are not verified as such by the sources, but are the sorts of things that happen on such occasions. Such a procedure is justified by the goal of conveying a total impression, in which the reality of a past event can be grasped. In the story of Jesus’ crucifixion such a typical detail would be the distribution of the condemned person’s clothes among the executioners, which could therefore have been introduced even if it were not given in a source.³¹ Similarly, it was usual for condemned criminals to carry the crossbeam through the city to the place of crucifixion.³² So, that Jesus carried his own cross could have been a typical detail inserted into John 19:17 (it is omitted from the early papyrus P⁶⁶, but the parallels in Matt 27:32, Mark 15:21 and Luke 23:26 assign this role to Simon of Cyrene (Luke specifies that he carried it behind Jesus), a detail that must have another origin.³³ Again, Robbins himself, as we have seen, draws attention to the fact that the Markan *chreia* does not mention Jesus’ burial, which is essential to the narratives of his resurrection in the Gospels as we have them. In fact, an account of what happened to Jesus’ dead body based on what was “typical” would have included its removal

³⁰ Latin text with English translation by H.E. Butler, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, vol. III (Loeb Classical Library, 126; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1976) 248–249.

³¹ That is not, however, what Robbins claims; rather, as we have seen, he contends that the incident narrated in the Gospels *originates* in Psa 22:19, which has been historicized (or “recontextualized”).

³² See Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 2.912–913, citing Plautus, *Carbonaria*, 2, and *Miles gloriosus*, 2.4.6–7.

³³ See the discussion in Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 2.913–917. Writers have often tried to harmonize the Johannine and the Synoptic versions, or adduce literary or theological motives to explain why John has Jesus carrying his own cross.

from the cross and burial—though “ignominiously and in obscurity” (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.202).³⁴ Such a dishonourable burial would also have “fulfilled” Isaiah 53:8, “He was given a grave with the wicked.” So the Gospel narratives of Jesus’ burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and the women coming to the empty tomb must have another origin.

AMPLIFICATION OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE BY JEWISH WRITERS

But perhaps, for parallels with Mark, we should be looking at Jewish, rather than Greek authors. Do we find there examples of the amplification of short narratives that can be compared with the hypothetical amplification of Mark 8:31, etc., to form the Gospel Passion narrative? The 1st century Jewish writers Philo and Josephus both retell Biblical stories, often expanding them, but also occasionally abridging and rearranging them. In general, they seem to follow closely the methods of the Hellenistic rhetoricians. To take but one example, the story in Gen 39:6b–20 of the attempt by Potiphar’s wife to seduce Joseph is retold by both, with a strongly moral emphasis on Joseph’s chastity.³⁵ Philo’s version, *On Joseph*, 40–53, represents over all a substantial amplification of the Biblical narrative. In 40–41 he expands the opening of the episode in Genesis, vv. 6b–8a; he also includes here the information from v. 12, that the woman took hold of Joseph’s tunic, and expands the scene with the vivid detail that she was dragging him towards the bed. However, he omits v. 11, which relates that on this occasion Joseph had come “into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household happened to be indoors.” It is at this point—apparently with the woman holding his tunic as she tries to drag him to the bed—that Joseph makes a speech (42–48), which develops the briefer speech of Gen 39:8b–9. He then flees, leaving his garment in her hands (49). Philo moves straight to the woman’s accusation of Joseph to her husband (50–52), which amplifies vv. 16–20 of the Genesis story: she adds a further accusation that Joseph had also seduced his fellow servants and alleges that she had cried out for help, at which Joseph had fled. This latter point somewhat changes the Genesis

³⁴ See Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 2.1209–1211.

³⁵ For the treatments of Gen 39:6–20 in Philo, Josephus and *The Testament of Joseph*, I am glad to acknowledge the contributions made by Jordash Kiffiak, Amit Gvaryahu and Beth Broadway, students of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, to the joint seminar on the New Testament mentioned in n. 1.

story in vv. 13–15, according to which, after Joseph had fled, she called in the servants and denounced him.

Josephus, *Ant.* 2.41–59, retells the same story, following more closely than Philo the steps of the story in Genesis. He makes explicit what is implicit in Genesis, supplies plausible motives and adds “colouring” (the woman’s chagrin at what has happened disguises her guilty passion and sufficiently resembles outraged grief as to deceive her husband). He also develops the speeches of Joseph (43), the woman (46–49) and again of Joseph (51–52), phrasing them in indirect speech; the woman’s second speech, to her husband (55–57), is, however, in direct speech. No important action is added to the Biblical story, and indeed Josephus omits altogether Gen 39:14–15, where Potiphar’s wife calls in the servants. On the other hand, he explains that Joseph found himself alone in the house with his master’s wife because there was a festival to which everybody else had gone, while she remained at home on the pretext of illness (45). Practically the same explanation is found in *Genesis Rabbah*, 87 (Vayesheb). 7.³⁶ Since the Midrash is most unlikely to have derived this element directly from Josephus, it may have been traditional.³⁷

The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* have come down to us in various versions; it is difficult to date them or be sure of their literary history.³⁸ *The Testament of Joseph, the eleventh son of Jacob and Rachel* as we have it seems to be composite and contains one passage of clearly Christian provenance.³⁹ Its principal theme is that of chastity, with a secondary concern on the part of Joseph to defend his brothers. The expansion of Gen 37:39–45 lies essentially in a lengthy elaboration of the various stratagems employed by the “Egyptian woman” (the wife of Potiphar) to induce

³⁶ *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, vol. II (trans. H. Freedman; London: Soncino, 1939) 811.

³⁷ Compare James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* (2nd ed.; Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1994) 266: “Early exegetical documents of various sorts seem to argue, by their very form as well as by the overwhelming store of exegetical motifs shared among them—and this despite their highly diverse origins and orientations—that there existed well before the common era a substantial body of standard explanations of various problems and peculiarities in the biblical text.”

³⁸ See “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A New Translation and Introduction,” by H.C. Kee in: James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. I. *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (New York, et al. Doubleday, 1983) 775–828. This editor believes that, excepting a certain number of Christian interpolations, the *Testaments* were composed by a “hellenized Jew,” probably in the 2nd century BCE; some have connected them with the Essenes; M. de Jonge holds that all were written by a Christian author around 200 CE (see Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 775–780).

³⁹ Translation and notes by Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 819–825.

Joseph into having sexual intercourse with her and in Joseph's resistance (3–7). The climax of the story is recounted quite briefly (8). Then follows a curious doublet, featuring the "Memphian woman," i.e., the wife of "Pentephris" (12–16).

Louis Ginzberg, in *The Legends of the Jews*, provides a narrative of Joseph and the wife of Potiphar, named Zuleika, which is in fact far longer (ca. 4200 words) than the Gospel Passion accounts (Mark, in English translation is ca. 1970 words) and is rich in incident and dialogue.⁴⁰ This he has reconstructed from a number of sources, including: *Genesis Rabbah* and other midrashic collections, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the Babylonian Talmud, Philo, and Josephus.⁴¹ It should be noted that the extended narrative given by Ginzberg does not exist *as such* in any of these sources, which belong to different periods and literary genres. This raises a methodological difficulty. For Ginzberg seems to have assumed that the full narrative, in something like the version he presents, did in fact exist, at least in oral form, and is attested by the sources he cites, which reproduce elements of it (or perhaps variants of them) according to their needs.⁴² But it seems, on the contrary, that each source has independently embellished this or that element of the Biblical story for its own purposes.⁴³ In that case the sources do not reproduce or reflect fragments of a longer narrative, which did not exist until Ginzberg put it together.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that Robbins has not made out his case: the Gospel Passion narratives are not the result of the amplification of a brief

⁴⁰ Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, Vol. II (*Bible Times and Characters from Joseph to the Exodus*, trans. Henrietta Szold; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1910) 44–58.

⁴¹ See the notes in vol. V, Notes to the Volumes I and II, *From the Creation to the Exodus*, 1925, 339–341.

⁴² Elias Lönnrot used a similar procedure, based on the same assumption, in piecing together the Finnish national epic *Kalevala* from traditional poems that he and others had collected in Finland and neighbouring Baltic countries.

⁴³ This is demonstrated by Kugel, *In Potiphar's House*, 13–124.

⁴⁴ Similarly, Kugel, *In Potiphar's House*, 10, n. 2, who remarks that Ginzberg "as a matter of policy sought to submerge utterly the exegetical character of these expansions... The great work of generations and centuries of Jewish exegetes was thus fundamentally distorted into being what it certainly was not, popular 'legends' that simply sprang up into the minds of the commonfolk just as the 'legends' of ancient Greece or the folklore of other civilizations."

statement such as that expressed in Mark 8:31, following the prescriptions of the Greco-Roman rhetorical manuals for the expansion of a *chreia* or similar narrative. More generally, there does not seem to be any precedent in those manuals for elaborating a brief account into a longer and more complex narrative comparable to the Gospels. Further, that tradition did not favour free invention in the amplification of a narrative; rather it worked within fairly strict rules. A look at specifically Jewish sources does not lead to any different conclusion. On the contrary, it seems more plausible to suppose that the story of Jesus' death and resurrection always existed as an extended and complex narrative, whose principal features were fixed, even though the treatment of details varied.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Compare James D.G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, vol. I. *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 765–769. See now also Justin Taylor, S.M., *The Treatment of Reality in the Gospels: Five Studies* (Cahiers de la Revue biblique 78; Pendé, France: Gabalda, 2011).

LOGOS AND PNEUMA IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL¹

Troels Engberg-Pedersen

THESIS AND STRATEGY

The aim of this essay is to give arguments for a new reading of the concept of “*pneuma*” (“spirit”) in the Gospel of John, including its relationship with the “*logos*” (“word” or “mind”) of the Gospel’s Prologue. The claim to be argued is that in addition to finding the intertextual context of the Johannine *logos* and *pneuma* in the Septuagint and in a Philonic type of Hellenistic Jewish thinking whose basic ontology was most comprehensively inspired by Plato, we need to bring in the Stoic understanding of *logos* and *pneuma* as the concept that best explains the work that the *pneuma* is actually intended to do in John’s overall conception of Jesus’ life and death. It would be foolish to deny that somewhere behind John’s talk of the *pneuma* we should find the claim in Genesis 1:2 that “a wind from God swept over the face of the waters” (NRSV). Similarly, it seems clear that there is some form of structural similarity between what Philo says of *logos* and *pneuma* and what we find in John. Still, the claim will be that if we are to account for the precise ways in which the concept of *pneuma* does explanatory work in John’s account of Jesus’ life and death, then we need to bring in a concept of *pneuma* that has the precise conceptual profile that it has in the Stoic conception.

The claim just mentioned is not entirely new. The idea itself of connecting the Johannine *logos* of the Prologue with the *pneuma* that the Baptist saw descend upon Jesus in connection with his baptism, as described in 1:29–34, was articulated more than two decades ago by Francis Watson: “*the union of the Logos or Son of God with Jesus of Nazareth took place in the*

¹ I dedicate this essay to Prof. Emeritus of Classics at the University of Copenhagen, Johnny Christensen. In the early 1970’s, Johnny Christensen, whose little masterpiece, *An Essay on the Unity of Stoic Philosophy* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962), remains a classic of the renewed interest in Stoicism, once conducted a public oral examination that I attended of a classicist who had submitted the Prologue of John’s Gospel as one of his test texts. During the exam Prof. Christensen asked the student what arguments could be produced for understanding the “*logos*” of John in the light of Stoicism. I forget the student’s answer—but the idea itself has stuck in my mind ever since.

descent of the Spirit at his Baptism."² More importantly, the idea of finding a Stoic-like *pneuma* behind John's use of the term is extensively argued for in a Copenhagen PhD dissertation from 2007 by Gitte Buch-Hansen, published in 2010 by Walter de Gruyter in Berlin.³ Where Watson argues for his specific point in an entirely different way from the one to be adopted below, Buch-Hansen focuses on what, adopting a suggestion from Adele Reinhartz, she calls the "meta-story of pneumatic transformations" as spelled out in the central parts of the Gospel of John from 1:32 through to chapter 20, arguing—quite convincingly to me—that a number of details in John's statements about the *pneuma* fall elegantly into place within a comprehensive understanding of the *pneuma* as soon as one reads the latter in the light of the Stoic material (and cognitive) conception of *pneuma*.⁴ In what follows, I shall presuppose the basic shape of the "meta-story of pneumatic transformations" for which Buch-Hansen argues with regard to some of the most salient occurrences of the concept of *pneuma* between 1:32 and chapter 20. Among these are the Johannine claim in 7:39 that "as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (NRSV) and the claim in 20:22 that before his final ascent into heaven the risen Jesus breathed the holy *pneuma* into his disciples—together with Buch-Hansen's fascinating analysis of the pneumatic transformation of the risen Jesus himself that is being described in chapter 20 as a whole.

If Buch-Hansen is right about the Stoic-like character and behaviour of the *pneuma* in the central part of John's Gospel, and if Watson was right about the connection between the *pneuma* at Jesus' baptism (1:32–33) and the *logos* becoming flesh in the Prologue (1:14), then the Prologue's *logos* will also be a Stoic-like *logos*. This claim will seem counter-intuitive not

² Francis Watson, "Is John's Christology Adoptionist?," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology* (eds. L.D. Hurst and N.T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 113–24, esp. 114 (Watson's italics).

³ Gitte Buch-Hansen, *"It Is the Spirit that Gives Life": A Stoic Understanding of Pneuma in John's Gospel* (BZNW, 173; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010). Buch-Hansen's dissertation was written under my direction while I was myself developing an understanding of the role of a Stoic-like *pneuma* in Paul which issued in my *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Buch-Hansen deserves full credit for having developed the "meta-story of pneumatic transformations" that I go on to identify in the text in the light of the Stoic understanding of the *pneuma*. The idea of combining directly John 1:14 with 1:32–33, both to be seen in a Stoic light, is an old one of mine.

⁴ See Adele Reinhartz, *The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel* (SBLMS 45; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), in which she speaks of a "cosmological meta-tale." For Buch-Hansen's quite independent development of this, see in particular her chapters 4 (pp. 151–203) and 7 (pp. 335–87).

only to those who take it that the account of the *logos* in the Prologue has its primary roots in the Septuagint, but also, and perhaps particularly so, to those who “hear” the *logos* in basically Platonic terms along the lines of the handling of *logos* in a Platonist Jew like Philo. The confrontation here is a pretty radical one, and for one reason: from the Wisdom of Solomon onwards through Philo and into second century Christian authors like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, the Platonic understanding of *logos* as an immaterial and “transcendent” entity has become a kind of default position within all later Christian thinking about the *logos*. The consequence is that the mere possibility of an alternative reading like a Stoically inspired one, which sees the *logos* as the cognitive side of a material phenomenon (the *pneuma*), meets with almost insuperable difficulties in our internal, mental makeup that must be overcome before it can even get a hearing. At the University of Copenhagen we have been working during the past decade on this precise issue, first in a research project entitled *Philosophy at the Roots of Christianity* (2003–07) and now (2008–13) in another research project entitled *Naturalism and Christian Semantics*. The attempt has been (among many other things) to see the period between 100 BCE and 200 CE as a “transitional period” in ancient philosophy, during which Stoicism as *the* dominant philosophy in ontology and ethics was gradually overtaken by Platonism.⁵ This leaves the possibility that early Christian writers of the first century CE, who were less directly involved with philosophy than, for instance, Philo, might still have considered Stoicism *their* default position, within which they might attempt to articulate their Christ message to the extent that they were at all thinking along philosophical lines. I have earlier and again quite recently argued this case for Paul.⁶ Gitte Buch-Hansen has made the same claim for John, and I am attempting in this essay to extend and provide additional support for this case with regard to John. Right here the plea is that we must not take it for granted that *if* there is a philosophical dimension to John’s talk of *logos* in the Prologue, then that dimension will automatically have to be understood along Platonic lines. On the contrary, there is an alternative possibility.

⁵ For this idea, see my “Setting the Scene: Stoicism and Platonism in the Transitional Period in Ancient Philosophy,” in *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (eds. Tuomas Rasimus, Ismo Dunderberg and Troels Engberg-Pedersen; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2010).

⁶ See my *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) and *Cosmology and the Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

The reference to the Wisdom of Solomon is highly relevant here inasmuch as the concept of *logos* in the Johannine Prologue is often, and quite rightly, connected with the figure of “wisdom” in Hellenistic Jewish literature, most strikingly precisely in the Wisdom of Solomon. Elsewhere, I have attempted to show that Wisdom starts out from giving an account of the figure of wisdom that draws more or less explicitly on the Stoic notion of the *pneuma*, but eventually introduces elements that are distinctly Platonic and in fact criticizes (though in a friendly manner) the Stoics for not being able to give an adequate account of God.⁷ (Here, it seems, the Platonists fared better.) Suppose that John thought of his *logos* in the light of Hellenistic Jewish ideas about the figure of wisdom and that he had *not* taken the tentative, Platonizing step that we find in Wisdom (and that was then brought to full flowering in Philo): then what we get is a Stoicizing understanding both of the wisdom-like *logos* of the Prologue and also of the *pneuma* of the rest of the gospel, where *logos* and *pneuma* refer to the very same thing as seen from two perspectives: a cognitive and a physical (material) one. It is this possibility that we should explore.⁸

Recently, Johannine studies have been enriched by attempts to get to grips with one feature that characterizes this gospel in particular: its extensive use of symbolism and imagery.⁹ No matter what else one will say about the Fourth Gospel, one will have to recognize its extensive use of metaphor and other indirect forms of speech. In spite of this, it is the contention of this essay that one should also allow for a quite substantial degree of concreteness with respect to some, at least, of John’s ways of speaking. It is not all just “symbolism,” “imagery,” “metaphor,” “poetry,” or “myth.”¹⁰ On the contrary, in what John says of the *pneuma* he seems to be very concretely cosmological by drawing on and giving expression

⁷ For this argument see Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and the Self*, chap. 1.

⁸ The question is often raised whether—if the case to be argued in this essay is right—we should think of a direct influence from Stoicism on John or of some other relationship. The question is probably unanswerable. Instead, let us see the exercise of reading John from a “Stoic-like” perspective as a heuristic device, the fruitfulness of which will alone depend on the extent to which it helps us understand better the Johannine text itself.

⁹ See Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (2nd ed., Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) and Ruben Zimmermann, *Christologie der Bilder im Johannesevangelium: die Christopoetik des vierten Evangeliums unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Joh 10* (WUNT 171; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2004).

¹⁰ Similarly, I object somewhat to the traditional, heavy talk of the many “riddles” (German *Rätsel*) in or behind the Fourth Gospel. See, for instance, the in itself excellent summary of this approach in Part I of John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991; 2nd ed. 2007).

to an understanding of the world that is both realistic and concrete. The resulting picture is perhaps somewhat less “*erhaben*” (German for “lofty” or “sublime”) than we normally expect from this author. But once one has grasped it, it may ring truer.

In this essay we shall have to confine ourselves to three chapters in the earlier part of the Gospel: chapter 1 (the Prologue and John the Baptist’s witness to Jesus’ being baptized with the *pneuma*), chapter 3 and chapter 6. Methodologically, we shall insist that each of the three passages must be studied as wholes. In each of them, as we shall see, John makes claims in the second halves of the chapters that are meant to elucidate claims made in the first.¹¹ It goes without saying that such an approach addresses the text “at the level of the final redaction” if one were to engage in the attempt to distinguish layers and histories behind those layers.¹² That whole issue need not detain us here. Surely, if a sufficient amount of overall sense can be given to the text as we have it, then that result will have to be figured in by anybody who feels the need to dismember it.

The methodological perspective points to the underlying view of the Gospel that will be tentatively adopted here. John will be read as a writer who in presenting his understanding of God, Jesus Christ, the Christ event and much more does what I would call *philosophy in narrative form*. Such a writer calls for a reader who behaves accordingly, that is, one who asks philosophical questions about the inner, logical connection of everything John’s Jesus says and does. Only in that way, it is claimed, will the precise meaning of the text come to light.

How can such an approach be defended? One answer consists in pointing to predecessors who have more or less adopted the same view. A very good example is C.H. Dodd, whose masterpiece, *The Interpretation of the*

¹¹ I had reached this conclusion before finding it confirmed by Wayne Meeks when I reread “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” in Meeks, *In Search of the Early Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); originally published in *JBL* 91 (1972) 44–72), 55–90, esp. 64: “rearrangement hypotheses result from the failure to perceive one of the most striking characteristics of the evangelist’s literary procedure: the elucidation of themes by progressive repetition.” In the cases we shall consider, at least, there may be more than an “elucidation of themes”: perhaps even a resolution of initial puzzles?

¹² The quoted phrase is from Ashton, *Understanding*, 179. Ashton’s book gives a splendid overview of a whole approach to John that has gradually been overtaken, both by narrative approaches, as inaugurated by R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), and also by the breakdown of the Martyn-Brown approach to the Johannine community and its text(s) brought about by Adele Reinhartz in “The Johannine Community and its Jewish Neighbors: A Reappraisal,” in *What is John?, Vol. II: Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; SBLSymS 7; Atlanta: Scholars Press) 111–38.

Fourth Gospel, took a huge step in the direction of connecting the Fourth Gospel with contemporary philosophy.¹³ Thus, for instance, in his analysis of the meaning of the term “*logos*” in John, Dodd moved from the “Old Testament” context, whose importance he fully recognized, via Hellenistic Jewish “wisdom literature” to Philo, in whom he found both Platonic and Stoic elements.¹⁴ Unfortunately, however, Dodd did not take the step back to Stoicism, probably because he was under the Platonizing spell that was created in the second century CE. Still, even if Dodd did not directly address the Fourth Gospel as a philosophical text, he certainly saw its continuity with such texts.

Another defence of the approach to be adopted is logically less appealing, but unavoidable. It consists in pointing to the gains in the understanding of the texts themselves that may be obtained by applying the preferred perspective to them. The risk of circularity is obvious here. Fortunately, I am not the only one who needs to be convinced. This is another place where the collective wisdom of experts on the given text will have to serve as the final arbiter.

There is a final introductory point. The essay will presuppose, but not present, the understanding of the Stoic concept of *pneuma* already hinted at.¹⁵ An excellent summary provided by C.H. Dodd himself may suffice here to remind us of its essential shape. The Stoics, Dodd said, understood the *pneuma* as

... a very tenuous form of air, partly akin to fire, having its proper residence in the sphere remotest from the earth, but also diffused through the whole, and appearing in living beings as the soul. ... this diffused, tenuous kind of air has the property of thought. To this “living and thinking gas” [perhaps it would be better to think of it as an “energy”] the Stoics gave the name of God.¹⁶

What Dodd has here identified are the following features of the Stoic *pneuma*: its “double aspect” character as having both a material dimension and a cognitive one (which equals the *logos*); and the fact that the *pneuma* (and *logos*) has its primary site in heaven, but may also literally

¹³ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

¹⁴ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 263–85.

¹⁵ For this see chap. 1 of my *Cosmology and Self*.

¹⁶ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 213. (Dodd has taken over the phrase “living and thinking gas” from the editor of the *Hermetica*, W. Scott. Dodd uses it repeatedly, e.g. on p. 218, probably to suggest *how* far away from the Fourth Gospel this conception is.)

enter human bodies where (as part of the soul) it may yield understanding. We shall see that all these dimensions help to articulate and hold together all that John says in the texts under scrutiny.

THE QUESTIONS

One way of articulating the questions we are after is as follows. The Prologue to the Gospel (1:1–18) is clearly meant to introduce the understanding of Jesus' identity within which the evangelist wants his reader to perceive the whole account of Jesus' earthly life (up until 20:31) that he is about to give. This earthly Jesus was the uniquely born son of God (1:14 and 18); he was God's *logos* ("word," "mind," "rational plan," or all three together), which had been with God from the beginning of the cosmos (1:1), but had then "become flesh" (*sarx*), as is famously stated at 1:14. This claim raises our first set of questions: in what way "was" the earthly Jesus God's eternal *logos*? How, to put it as crudely as possible, was the earthly Jesus present with God at the beginning of time? Or the other way round: how did the *logos* "become" flesh? How are we to imagine that the *logos* that was present with God at the beginning of time later, and at a wholly specific point in time, "became" or was in some way specifically tied to an individual, fleshly body: that of the earthly man, Jesus?

Underlying this set of questions there is the sense indicated above that John did not just speak "loosely" or "metaphorically" when he said that the *logos* "became" flesh. On the contrary, the fact that he does begin by speaking in explicitly cosmological terms of the whole cosmos as having been "created through" the *logos* (1:2 and 10) suggests that the claim about the *logos* "becoming" flesh—where flesh presumably constitutes one half of the "cosmos," the other half being that of heaven (*ouranos*, compare 3:31 with 6:62–63)—should have a similarly concrete, cosmological sense. We cannot know this in advance and the legitimacy of the traditional, looser and more metaphorical understanding cannot be ruled out *a priori*. But John's cosmogonic set-up with its similarity to the account of wisdom in chapter 1 of the Wisdom of Solomon does suggest the alternative reading. In that case, exactly how are we to understand the *logos* for it to be able to "become" flesh?

The set of questions just listed are raised by the Prologue itself the moment one begins to read it as an even vaguely philosophical text. A second set of questions concerns the precise way in which the *logos* was understood by John to have been active in everything Jesus said and

did as those things are described in the Gospel account that follows the Prologue. If the *logos* was in some concrete, cosmological sense present in the earthly Jesus, how does that supposed fact explain what John has his Jesus say and do throughout the Gospel? Does Jesus' behaviour only in some unspecified way "reflect" the fact that he is the *logos* incarnate? Or should we also bring in some more concrete understanding of the way Jesus' behaviour was informed by the *logos*, one that will respond to a more distinctly philosophical querying?

An alternative (but in fact closely congruent) way of articulating our query is as follows. Both at 1:15 and 30, the evangelist has John the Baptist say of Jesus that "the one who is coming after me came before me since he was superior to me." But how can one and the same person *come into* the world so as to come *after* the Baptist—and also be said to have come *before* the Baptist by being superior to him? It is clear that this highly paradoxical way of speaking fits immediately with the picture of Jesus that the Prologue is intended to develop and present. Jesus both *was* "in the beginning" and *comes into* the world at a specific point in time. But how can that be? What does the statement actually mean?

THE PROPOSED ANSWER

The answer for which I shall argue consists of a mixture of linguistic legislation and substantive interpretive claims about the connection between the Prologue and the account given in 1:29–34 of the Baptist's witness to Jesus' baptism.

Here is the proposal: Jesus did not exist at the beginning of time, the *logos* did. "Jesus" refers to the earthly Jesus, who was born (presumably "of blood" and "of the will of the flesh" and "of the will of man," 1:13 NRSV) at a certain point in time. However, this Jesus *became* the *logos* incarnate when "the *logos* became flesh" (1:14), *and that happened* when Jesus was baptized (by God) by having the *pneuma* come down upon him and staying there (1:32–33). At that time Jesus became the Son of God (1:34), the uniquely born son (of God, 1:14 and 18) or, finally, the Messiah or Christ (1:41), the king of Israel (1:49). *This* figure—so different from the earthly "Jesus"—we may identify as "Jesus Christ." Of him it is in fact true to say (as he himself does, cf. 8:58) that he existed at the beginning of time and distinctly before John the Baptist. But it is also true to say that he "came" *after* the Baptist since the "symbiosis" of the *logos* and Jesus that generated "Jesus Christ" happened after the appearance of the Baptist, namely, when the latter literally *saw* the *pneuma* descend upon Jesus.

Suppose this picture makes sense of the apparent paradox. Then there are two implications. First, the picture presupposes that the *logos* and the *pneuma* are exceedingly closely connected, almost two sides of the same thing. For it was claimed that the *logos* “became flesh” precisely when the *pneuma* descended upon Jesus. Where do we find *logos* and *pneuma* to be so closely connected? Second, the picture presupposes that two different things are as it were present at the same time and place. According to the picture, “Jesus Christ” was both a human being of flesh and blood—he was “flesh” (1:14)—and a place-holder for the *pneuma*, which was also the *logos*. But how can that be? How can the *pneuma* (and *ex hypothesi* the *logos*) be at the same time and place where Jesus’ fleshly body also was?

For answers to these questions we must go to Stoicism. In Stoicism, as we already noted, *logos* and *pneuma* are in fact two sides of the same thing. The term “*pneuma*” is used for the material or physical side of this entity, whereas the term “*logos*” is used to identify its cognitive side. It is one and the same thing, but it has two ontological sides to it. This “double aspect” theory pertains to all phenomena that are treated within the Stoic philosophy of mind. They are physical, but they are also cognitive.¹⁷ Also in Stoicism we find the idea that two things can in fact be at the same time in the same place. This was claimed in the Stoic ontological theory of “complete blending” (*krasis di’ holou*), according to which bodies may be “completely extended throughout the substance and properties of one another while maintaining their original substance and properties in this mixture.”¹⁸ Moreover, one example of this special kind of mixture was precisely the presence of (divine or heavenly) *pneuma* in human beings of flesh and blood.

With these two pieces of theory on board we can answer the various questions we have raised. The *logos* was present together with God at the

¹⁷ Compare on this Julia Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), whose general account of the Stoic philosophy of mind is excellent (e.g. 37–70 on “The Soul and the Mind” and 71–87 on “Perceiving and Thinking”). For example this: “It is central to the Stoic analysis that when I perceive an object, one and the same item, the appearance, is both a physical alteration of my soul-*pneuma* and an item realizing propositional content, which can be assented to and produces a true or false belief. There have to be items *with both these aspects*” (78, my italics in the last four words).

¹⁸ From Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture*, in *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (von Arnim) 2.473 as translated by A.A. Long in *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (London: Duckworth, 1974) 159. For the whole theory see A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley (eds.), *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 and later), section 48.

beginning of time, and the whole cosmos and everything in it were created by the *pneuma* (and the cognitive *logos*) when this physical force gave structure to the world as its so-called “active cause.”¹⁹ The *logos* also became flesh when it came to be present as *pneuma* in a specific piece of flesh: in the human being Jesus. In that way “Jesus Christ” was generated as a being who was at one and the same time both a completely sarkic and a completely pneumatic one. This blended being may well be said to have existed at the beginning of time since its crucial component of *pneuma* and *logos* was present then. But it may also, of course, be said to have come into existence at a specific time: when the *pneuma* and *logos* descended upon the sarkic, earthly Jesus.²⁰

MORE ON JOHN 1

So far we have only presented a conception that dissolves the paradox of the statement made by John the Baptist and answers the first set of questions we raised. For the second set of questions we must wait until we will look at chapters 3 and 6. Before moving on to those chapters we may make a few more observations on John 1 that tend to support the picture I have drawn from that chapter of the relationship between the *logos*, the human being Jesus, the *pneuma* and Jesus Christ.

There are three relevant points worthy of note in the Prologue. One is that the Prologue is clearly aiming at depicting a dynamic movement in the world as a whole that goes from the *logos* as such to a gradual presence of the *logos* in the earthly Jesus. In John 1:1–5 there is nothing to indicate that John is speaking of Jesus. Nor in fact is there any such direct indication in 1:6–8 even though the witness of John the Baptist of

¹⁹ For the active cause in Stoicism, see Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, section 44. In Stoicism, the creative process is part of the cosmic cycle, for which see Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, section 46. It goes without saying that John will not have been thinking in terms of a cycle.

²⁰ Here I need to point to one feature of John's account which distinguishes it fairly precisely from what has just been stated: it is not after all quite clear that John's Jesus is *already* a totally “blended” being. Rather, John distinctly says that having descended from above the *pneuma* “remained upon” (ἐπέμεινεν ἐπ’ αὐτόν) Jesus (1:32 and 33). As Gitte Buch-Hansen has shown (in her chapter 7), the actual, complete blending only takes place after Jesus' death, as the change is described in chapter 20. Thus, in his earthly state Jesus may have been a sarkic figure with the *pneuma* “hovering above” him—sufficiently strongly for it to influence all his sayings and doings, but nevertheless not so strongly present in Jesus' body that it was impossible to mistake him for being merely sarkic (as “the Jews” obviously did).

course serves to move the reader far closer to Jesus. Then in 1:9–13 the text first announces that the true light (that is, the *logos*) was (by now) “coming into the world” (9),²¹ but only in order to repeat in verse 10 the perspective of 1:1–5 by explicitly going back to the creation. This indicates that the term αὐτόν (“it” or “him”) of 1:10 refers to the *logos* of 1:1–4 and nothing else, that is, not yet to Jesus nor even to Jesus Christ. By 1:11–13, however, the text must be speaking specifically of Jesus—but *as* the *logos* and thus *as* Jesus Christ: first (11) of his reception by the Jews and next (12–13) of his reception by those who believed in him. In this *gradual* way, then, the road finally becomes clear for speaking of the earthly, sarkic Jesus in the statement that “the *logos* became flesh” (1:14). The point of this observation is to bring out that the text aims to focus on the precise moment when the *logos* (as an aboriginal entity) *came together with* the earthly Jesus—in exactly the way this is then spelled out in John the Baptist’s witness in 1:29–34 to Jesus’ baptism by the *pneuma*. In other words, the Prologue and the later passage fit very closely together. This points towards the interpretation proposed above: 1:29–34 spells out exactly how “the *logos* became flesh.”

A second observation that goes in the same direction points to the fact that the Baptist’s witness in the Prologue (1:6–8 and 15), which has seemed to some scholars rudely to break into an otherwise smooth text, is one more thing that ties the Prologue together with 1:29–34. For the latter is of course yet another witness on the part of the Baptist, and in fact an even more crucial one. This tight connection is emphasized when the evangelist has the Baptist refer explicitly back at 1:30 to what he had said in 1:15. The connection has a very precise point. For it almost explicitly connects the statement of 1:14 that the *logos* became flesh with the Baptist’s description in 1:32–34 of what he had himself seen as confirming that Jesus was the one of whom he had spoken: Jesus had received the *pneuma*, which remained on him, and God had told the Baptist that it was Jesus who would baptize with holy *pneuma* and hence, as the Baptist witnesses, that “he is the son of God” (1:34)—precisely as he was said to be

²¹ The question of how syntactically to construe verse 9 is a famous crux. For my own part I find that the alternative construal to the one implied above is weakened by (a) an unclarity about exactly who or what the supposed grammatical subject for ἦν would be on that construal and (b) the lack of a definite article in front of ἐρχόμενον (if the text is taken to mean . . . “every human being *who* comes into the world”). In addition, on the preferred construal there is an important play in 1:9–11 on the idea that the “light” both *was* in the world—and was also *coming into* it. That “tension” (which is no tension at all) is exactly what the Prologue is all about.

in the Prologue at 1:14 and 18. In this way the motif of the Baptist's witness ties together what chapter 1 as a whole has to say about the *logos* and the *pneuma*, suggesting (as I proposed) that the *logos* "became flesh" by the earthly Jesus' receiving the *pneuma*.

In the light of these two observations we may well claim, as I did, that a later text in chapter 1 serves to explain and spell out what has been said in an earlier text of that chapter.

A third observation on John 1 is more relevant to the themes we shall be discussing in connection with chapters 3 and 6. It has to do with a double description given in 1:12–13 and 1:14 and 16 of the way in which believers (third person for 1:12–13) and "we" (1:14 and 16) have come to "receive" (1:12 and 16) Jesus as what he has now been described to be: the *logos* incarnate, Christ. Two points are important here. In 1:12–13 the term "believers" (*pisteuontes*, 12) is used, which will play a huge role later in the Gospel. But John also connects the implied "faith" (*pistis*) with something different: becoming children of God (12) on the basis of having been born "from God" (13). This idea points directly forward to chapter 3, where the motif of being (re)born is explicitly connected with receiving the *pneuma*. Thus although it is not actually mentioned in the Prologue, the *pneuma* is actually within its horizon, as it should be if the proposed relationship between *logos* and *pneuma* is on the right track.

The other point concerns the term "fullness" in 1:16 used of Christ, which refers back to the idea in 1:14 that the unique son of God is "full" of grace and truth. Why "full"? One might certainly reply: because the *logos* is now "fully" present in the fleshly human being that it has now "become." But if this is meant to be more than a vaguely metaphorical way of speaking, the underlying picture can hardly be that *logos* is the kind of thing it is in Plato and Philo, namely, some kind of immaterial substance that cannot have any tangible relation to material flesh. Instead, for it to "fill up" the flesh that it has by now "become," it must itself be a material entity, as it is when it is understood as the cognitive counterpart of a Stoic-like *pneuma*. In short, the idea of Christ's fullness suggests that the *logos* has come to be present in the flesh of Jesus Christ as being itself a material entity of the Stoic type, namely, as *pneuma*.

These observations do not by themselves prove that the proposed reading is correct. But they do add some degree of persuasiveness to that reading. Let us now go to chapters 3 and 6 and consider whether the notion of a Stoic-like *logos-pneuma* will throw further light on those passages. Here we will no longer be exclusively concerned with the founding event

that made Jesus the Christ, but also with the rest of his life and the lives of those who believe in him.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL ROLE OF THE *PNEUMA* IN JOHN 3

The topic of chapter 3 is how human beings come to “see the kingdom of God” (3:3) and “enter into the kingdom of God” (3:5). The quick answer is that they must be (re)born from above (3:3) or born from the *pneuma* (3:8), and this is somehow connected with being “born from water and *pneuma*” in baptism (3:5). Well and good. This captures the main content of 3:1–8. But when Nicodemus then asks (3:9) how that—presumably meaning “being born from the *pneuma*” in 3:8—may come about, Jesus gives a very complex answer that basically speaks of two things: his own fate and its relevance for knowing the answer to Nicodemus’ question (3:10–13) and the purpose of that fate with regard to human beings’ coming to “have eternal life” (3:14–16). The latter is then spelled out (3:17–21) in a way that makes it come out as being something that may be present here and now once the condition for it is fulfilled. In all this, what does John want his Jesus to say? What are the internal, logical connections between the various parts of Jesus’ speech?

Jesus’ first point is that Nicodemus (even as a “teacher of Israel”) does not know (3:10) and cannot know since he does not even believe in anything Jesus might say about earthly matters (3:12). Jesus himself speaks of and witnesses to things that he knows and has seen (3:11) even though they be heavenly matters (3:12) since as the “son of man” Jesus has himself descended from heaven. If we take the terms about “seeing,” “earthly matters” (*ta epigeia*), “heavenly matters” (*ta epourania*) and “heaven” (*ouranos*) literally and connect the idea of Jesus having descended from heaven with what this is all supposed to answer—namely, how one may become “born from the *pneuma*”—we get the following picture: (1) Jesus has received the *pneuma* literally from heaven, which is its natural abode; in that sense he, as the “son of man,” has “descended from heaven.” (2) *Through* the *pneuma* Jesus *knows* about heavenly matters; for he has *seen* them (through the *pneuma*). (3) *Similarly* (and this is the conclusion and the answer to Nicodemus), one can only “see” the kingdom of God (which is in heaven) or even “enter” it if one becomes reborn by having the same experience with the *pneuma* that Jesus has had. (4) And that happens in baptism.

So far, so good. However, at 3:14 Jesus' speech takes an unexpected turn. Here he speaks of his own resurrection (as the "son of man") and states as its purpose that it should generate "faith" (*pistis*), through which human beings will come to "have" eternal life. This eternal life is then spelled out as being something that is present here and now, presumably on earth. In all this, where did the *pneuma* go? If *pistis* is sufficient for human beings to have eternal life already on earth and in the present on the basis of such *pistis*, then what we took to be the clear implication of Jesus' first (3:3–8) and second (3:9–13) answers to Nicodemus, namely, that the *pneuma* is necessary both for "seeing" and for "entering" the kingdom of God, seems to have lost all its point. What, then, is the precise relationship between obtaining the *pneuma* as a prerequisite for seeing and entering the kingdom of God—and having faith in the resurrected "son of man" as a prerequisite for having eternal life already here and now?

This question is one that any reader should pose if one wants philosophical clarity about what is being said in this text. The question is made even more perplexing when one observes that 3:18–21, which describes in more detail the salvific situation in the present of those who have faith, uses language that recalls 1:9–13 in the Prologue. For there the presupposition for salvation was not only said to be *pistis*, but also being "(re)born from God"—just as in 3:1–8. Once again, what is the exact relationship between *pneuma* and *pistis*?

Jesus' speech is over in John 3:21. Then follows a short notice telling that Jesus left Jerusalem for Judaea, where he went about baptizing (3:22), then another short notice on John the Baptist, who baptized elsewhere (3:23)—and then we hear about a clash among John's disciples over the fact that by baptizing Jesus intrudes upon the Baptist's field (3:26). Is all this talk about baptizing at all relevant to Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus? Yes. The Baptist's reply to his disciples shows that it is. And here it is most important not to conclude the Baptist's reply at 3:30: the rest of the chapter (3:31–36) is an intrinsic part of his reply; moreover, it also provides an answer to the question of the relationship between *pneuma* and *pistis* that we ended up with.²²

²² For an alternative account of the "genesis" of chapter 3, see Ashton, *Understanding*, 374–77. David Rensberger saw clearly that 3:31–36 should be given to the Baptist, see his *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 52–63.

The Baptist begins his reply (3:27–30) by in effect repeating his witness to Jesus from 1:19–28. But he also adds here an image suggesting that while Jesus is the bridegroom, the Baptist is the bridegroom's friend who stands and "listens (*akouein*)" to the bridegroom and rejoices "because of the voice (*phônê*) of the bridegroom" (3:29). The Baptist listens and hears Jesus' voice. Since earlier in the chapter (3:8) we have already heard of the *pneuma*, which blows where it wishes "and you hear its voice (*phônê*)," we are again brought into the vicinity of the *pneuma* here.

Then in 3:31–36, the Baptist first (3:31–33) speaks of Jesus as one who is coming from above in a manner that closely recalls the two first, *pneuma*-oriented halves of Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus (3:1–13). However, he ends up (3:35–36) speaking in a manner that equally clearly recalls the *pistis*-oriented second half of Jesus' speech (3:14–21). Moreover, here the Baptist speaks of "eternal life" as something one may both have in the present and also something one may (or may not) eventually come to "see" in the future.

Note then the precise verse in the middle of this (3:34): For the one whom God has sent out *speaks God's words* (*rhêmata*). For he (God) does not give the *pneuma* only partially."

This single verse binds together the talk in 3:31–33 of Jesus' heavenly sojourn and origin and his witness on earth to what he has seen and heard up there with the talk in 3:35–36 of God's act in the Christ event and its purpose that the one who has *pistis* in the son will have eternal life. And the link is this: By having received the *pneuma* from heaven (and hence having seen and heard what belongs up there), Jesus is also able to speak words that are an expression of *pneuma* and thus God's words. *And these are the words that generate pistis.*

Thus the latter half of the Baptist's speech shows that the two halves of Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus hang closely together logically. It is true that one must receive the *pneuma* (be reborn from above and from the *pneuma*) in order to see and enter the kingdom of God. Moreover, this has been made possible by the descent of the "son of man" (or Jesus Christ), that is, by the earthly Jesus' receiving the *pneuma* from above. But it happens *through Jesus' words*, which are themselves an expression of the divine *pneuma*. And the result of these words when they operate to the intended effect is—*pistis*.

Does that mean that *pistis* itself presupposes not only that Jesus speaks pneumatic words, but also that believers have themselves received a portion of the divine *pneuma*? Presumably not *before* they obtain *pistis*.

But the clear message of the whole of chapter 3 must be that *in* coming to believe in Jesus Christ, believers also receive their part of the divine *pneuma*.²³

It is likely that John the Baptist is already playing on this idea in his description of the bridegroom's friend. Hearing the bridegroom and rejoicing because of his voice already presuppose that the friend grasps the pneumatic words that come out of the bridegroom's mouth. In that case he will also receive (enough of) the *pneuma* that streams out of that mouth.

So, the whole of John 3 is about epistemology. It presents a theory about the prerequisites for coming to belong within the circle established by Jesus Christ. There are two such prerequisites: having the *pneuma* and having *pistis*. What, then, is the exact relationship between the two? Answer: they are the physical and the cognitive side of the very same coin. We have seen that both Jesus and the Baptist speak very concretely about heaven and earth in a manner that ties the *pneuma* very strongly to heaven. The *pneuma* belongs in heaven, but may then also come down to earth to take up its abode either in (or "upon") Jesus (who more or less is the *pneuma* here on earth) and in believers, who receive a portion of this *pneuma* by listening to Jesus' pneumatic words. In all this the *pneuma* is very much to be understood as a physical entity. But the *pneuma* is also closely connected with cognitive terms. It has given Jesus "knowledge" (3:11) of heavenly things and made him "see" (3:11 and 32) and "hear" (3:32) them. And then it also makes him "speak" divine words (3:34) about what he has seen and knows (3:11). In all this the *pneuma* clearly has a cognitive side. And this side comes out most clearly when we consider its impact on human beings, which is *pistis*. For *pistis* is of course a cognitive state through and through.

We may conclude that chapter 3 of the Fourth Gospel constitutes a tightly structured text once one allows oneself to put philosophical pressure on its various parts. We may also conclude that what initially appeared puzzling about the text (the relationship between 3:1–13 and 3:14–21) falls neatly into place as soon as one sees that a Stoic-like understanding of the *pneuma* gives that notion a role in the text that is far more important

²³ It must be emphasized that this part will be rather small and definitely smaller than the amount had by the earthly Jesus himself. In his case, as we know, the *pneuma* "remained upon him" (1:32–33). By contrast, in the case of believers who had "heard" Jesus, full possession of the *pneuma* lay in the future (cf. 7:39: οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἐδοξάσθη), only to be had when the almost transfigured Jesus had blown it into them (20:22).

than merely consisting of a few, haphazard, direct references to it. These references *are* there (most obviously in 3:8 and 3:34), but they are not haphazard. Rather, the *pneuma* should be seen as pervading the whole text from beginning to end, which is also the reason why the talk about baptism (that of Jesus and John the Baptist) is right on target. For the target is just that: the *pneuma*. It is the *pneuma*, as received by human beings in *pistis* and baptism, that allows them both to see and enter the kingdom of God and to have eternal life both in the present and in the future. Finally, we may note not only how *pistis* finds a precise place in John's conception as a cognitive state that expresses the possession of *pneuma*, but also how the *logos* of the Prologue turns up again—although in a somewhat altered form—as the cognitive counterpart of the *pneuma*. For when Jesus “speaks the words of God” (3:34), he is clearly giving voice to the *logos* of the Prologue; he is “exegeting” the unseen God (as 1:18 has it). If chapter 3 was about epistemology, chapter 6 will turn out to be about ontology.

THE ONTOLOGICAL ROLE OF THE *PNEUMA* IN JOHN 6

In chapter 6, Jesus' feeding of five thousand people (6:1–15) is followed by his walking on the sea and the perplexed query by the crowd how he has got to the other side (6:16–25). This leads to the text on which we shall focus: a speech by Jesus (6:26–40) followed by a dialogue with “the Jews” (6:41–58) that is taken further in a dialogue with Jesus' own disciples (6:60–71). Once again we shall see that a change of venue (cf. 6:59) and of dialogue partners does not in the least bring John's treatment of a given theme to an end. On the contrary, we shall again see that problems raised by the earlier part of the text are resolved in its latter part.²⁴

There are two connected main themes in this text. What is the true food (*brôsis*) that gives eternal life (6:27) or the true “bread” (*artos*) from heaven (6:31)? And how may human beings gain eternal life, presumably through eating that “bread”? The two themes are intertwined. In 6:26–29 Jesus tells the crowd that in order to obtain “the food that leads to eternal life” (6:27), they must have *pistis* in the one (Jesus himself) whom God has sent (6:29). This answers the second question. In 6:30–35 Jesus then justifies the claim about the necessity of having *pistis* in “the one whom

²⁴ Seen in this light it is disappointing that R. Alan Culpepper (of all people) does not see the inner connections across v. 59 in his commentary on *The Gospel and Letters of John* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998) 158–64.

God has sent" by stating that the true bread from heaven (6:32), God's bread (6:33), is the one who descends from heaven and gives life to the cosmos (6:33), that is, himself (6:35). This answers the first question. Then 6:36–40 combines the two themes. Jesus has himself descended from heaven (the first theme, 6:38) in order that "everyone who sees the son and has *pistis* in him" may "have eternal life"—and (NB) will be resurrected on the last day by him (the second theme, 6:40). The last addition here is of great importance for what follows. And of course it specifically adds to the idea of "having" eternal life in the present, which was most clearly in focus in John 3.

Next when the Jews demur at Jesus' claim that he is himself the bread that has descended from heaven (6:41), Jesus in effect repeats (in 6:43–46) the content of 6:36–40, which leads to the statement that "the one who has *pistis* has eternal life" (6:47). The content of 6:44–46 is interesting, though, since Jesus here uses some special vocabulary for how one obtains *pistis*: God ("the Father who has sent me") must (1) "draw" a person to himself (6:44)—then Jesus will raise the person on the last day; one must (2) "hear" and "learn" from the Father (6:45)—then one will come to Jesus; one need not, however, have (3) "*seen*" the Father (6:46), for that is the prerogative of "the one who is from God," that is, Jesus himself.

We have already met the idea of "hearing" from the Father, which we saw to imply the *pneuma* in some way. That reading also fits the idea of the Father "drawing" human beings towards him, at least if one takes seriously the apparently non-metaphorical, quite literal meaning of the term. Thus it should not come as a surprise if we will end up finding traces of the *pneuma* being at work here in making human beings "come to" Jesus (6:44 and 45). As noted, however, the explicit term employed at 6:47 is having *pistis*. But as we know from chapter 3, the *pneuma* and *pistis* are quite closely connected.

If we are on the right track in finding traces of the *pneuma* in John 6:44–46, then we can understand better the point made in those verses of a difference between Jesus himself and human beings at large. Jesus has himself *seen* the Father—presumably because the *pneuma* descended in its fullness upon *him*. Believers, by contrast, may in fact also have received the *pneuma* (as just suggested and in accordance with our findings in chapter 3). Still, they will have received it only *indirectly*: by being "drawn" by God towards him *through Jesus* and by "hearing" and "learning" from God, and again *through Jesus*. In this way, although the *pneuma* will be involved both with Jesus' *seeing* the Father and with believers' "hearing"

from the father, a difference is maintained, which is of course precisely the difference between “seeing” and “believing” (namely, from hearsay).

John 6:47 explicitly states what Jesus has been talking about in 6:44–46. But 6:47 also introduces a new section in the argument, which gradually becomes almost absurdly literal. Not only is Jesus the bread that descends from heaven, “from which” one must “eat” in order to obtain eternal life (6:50 and 51): that bread is also Jesus’ fleshly body (*sarx*) that he will give on behalf of the life of the cosmos (6:51 end). The Jews are duly shocked (6:52), which only leads Jesus to spell out in excruciating detail how if they do not eat the flesh of the “son of man” and drink his blood, they will not “have life in themselves” (6:53). By contrast, the one who munches Jesus’ flesh and drinks his blood both has eternal life and will also be raised by Jesus on the final day (6:54). In the remainder of this section (6:55–58) Jesus spells this further out and ties the whole idea back to the first theme of who is “the bread that has descended from heaven” in contrast to the bread that was eaten in the desert by the fathers (6:58, going back via 6:49 to 6:31).

At this point the reader of chapter 6 should be puzzled. If the answer offered up until 6:47 to the second theme of how human beings may gain eternal life was basically “through *pistis* (in Jesus as the bread from heaven),” then how come that the condition is now stated to be something that has clearly to do with the Eucharist? And indeed, why does John make Jesus go into such excruciating detail about the literal and material consumption of his flesh and blood, a theme that does seem very different from that of (cognitive) *pistis*?

I repeat: the reader should be puzzled. Fortunately, Jesus goes on—across a change of venue and dialogue partners—in a manner that helps to solve the puzzle. His disciples consider what he has said (in fact, his full “*logos*”!) “hard”: who can “hear” (!) that (6:60)? And Jesus knows that it constitutes a stumbling stone for them (6:61): and therefore says in 6:62–63:

But what then if you *see* the son of man ascend where he was previously? It is the *pneuma* that makes alive, the flesh does not benefit anything. The words (*rhêmata*) that I have spoken to you are *pneuma* and they are life. (64) But there are some among you who do not have *pistis*...

This statement solves the puzzle in the following way. Jesus’ words to the disciples while he was here on earth were—as we know—pneumatic words that will bring life to those who believe them. We also know that the *pistis* that they generate comes with a portion of *pneuma* to or in the

believers, though not the full one that only Jesus has. In this way it is the *pneuma* that makes alive even here on earth. However, when the “son of man” will eventually ascend to heaven from where he came, it is the *pneuma* that accounts for that (just as we have understood his descent as being tied to the descent of the *pneuma*). The *pneuma* makes the “son of man” come alive literally, presumably by filling out or transforming his flesh, which in itself benefits nothing. *Similarly*, when the disciples have seen the “son of man” ascend—by means of the *pneuma*, as Jesus has now explained—they too will obtain life in the literal sense of resurrection to eternal life if they receive the same amount of life-producing *pneuma* as Jesus had. *And that is what is brought about by the Eucharist*. For, as we must add, the flesh of the “son of man” that they eat and the blood that they drink *is—pneuma*.²⁵

This reading of John 6:62–64 solves the puzzle. In the first half of the speech and dialogue (up until 6:47) Jesus is talking about *pistis* and mainly focusing on eternal life in the present. This, we might say, is a cognitive understanding of “eternal life.” (Only in 6:40 and 6:44 is he pointing towards the following talk of future resurrection, as in 6:54 and 6:62–63.) We saw that there may be a hint in 6:44–46 that the *pneuma* is involved in connection with *pistis* and eternal life in the present too (as of course it is). However, it is only in the second half of the speech and dialogue (from 6:47 onwards), when Jesus begins to speak of eternal life in the future in the form of resurrection on the final day, that he brings in the *pneuma* with full force. This is a fully ontological understanding of “eternal life,” one that is not just cognitive but also physical. Access to this part of the complete salvation scheme requires ingestion of the (by now completely) pneumatic Jesus into the bodies of believers. And that happens in the Eucharist, which precisely presupposes that Jesus has left the earth and has ascended to heaven as *pneuma*.

In this way the puzzle is solved by seeing that Jesus is in effect talking of two different stages in the scheme of salvation: present and future, cognitive and ontological. However, and this is the fundamental point, what he says of these two stages only hangs logically together because there is a single thing—the *pneuma*—that is present at both stages *and* because at both stages this single thing, which *accounts* for *pistis* (in the present)

²⁵ For this precise idea compare Paul in 1 Cor 12:13: “For by one *pneuma* we were all baptized into one body . . . and we were all given one *pneuma* to drink” (πάντες ἐν πνεύματι ἐποτίσθημεν, my translation).

and resurrection (in the future), is at one and the same time a cognitive entity and a physical one. Thus we have actually seen—in connection with 6:44–46—that the (physical) *pneuma* seems invoked in connection with *pistis* too. And Jesus' statement in 6:63 that his words are *pneuma* presupposes the same combination of something physical and cognitive. Conversely, the extremely physical connotations of what Jesus says of the Eucharist and—by implication—of the presence of the physical *pneuma* in that ritual are not intended to exclude a cognitive aspect of the same event. On the contrary, for 6:62–63 to constitute a reply to the disciples' mumblings concerning Jesus' "hard talk" of the Eucharist, the idea must be that their eventual participation in the Eucharist will presuppose a cognitive event: their *seeing* the "son of man" ascend to the place where he was before (6:62). By seeing that and by ingesting the pneumatic Jesus' (presumably pneumatically transformed) flesh and blood, they will themselves become able to reach the final stage of the salvation scheme: the resurrection to eternal life.

CONCLUSION

There is no need to repeat here the details of the proposed readings of John 1, 3 and 6. The basic point is that underlying the hard and superficially quite enigmatic talk both of John's protagonist, Jesus, and of the evangelist himself, there seems to be a distinctly cosmological picture that focuses on the *pneuma* and a number of different, but still closely connected functions that it has, functions that can all be seen to hang intrinsically and logically together once one understands the Johannine concept of the *pneuma* along Stoic lines as an entity that is at one and the same time both physical and cognitive.

Has it been proven in this essay that John's basic frame of reference for his talk of *logos* and *pneuma* was the Stoic one? Here much depends on whether the reader is prepared to adopt the kind of interpretation that raises philosophical questions about the inner connection of what is said in the text over longer stretches of it. No actual proof can be given that such an approach is justified. For justification one must appeal to the extent to which the approach and the ensuing reading will generate sufficient agreement among experts on the text. Nevertheless, a fair number of considerations can be adduced to show that reading John on *logos* and *pneuma* within a Stoic framework helps to ease the understanding of his text considerably.

With regard to what John says of believers, adopting the Stoic perspective immediately explains why John may operate side by side with an understanding of believers' eschatological salvation ("life") that is both present (and cognitive) and future (and physical). Indeed, it seems that *only* a Stoic perspective will allow John's excessive emphasis on the physicality of the Eucharist as we have seen it in chapter 6, which seems closely connected with the idea of future, physical resurrection. Here the crucial claim is this (6:63): "It is the *pneuma* that makes alive, the flesh does not benefit anything. . . ."²⁶

This is so close to Paul's claim in 1 Cor 15:45 about "*pneuma* that makes alive"²⁷ that a reference to this text is actually given in Nestle-Aland. (Indeed, for John's claim about the flesh one might include a reference to 1 Cor 15:50 to the effect that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.")²⁸ But then, if—as I have argued elsewhere—Paul's handling in 1 Corinthians 15 of the "pneumatic body" of resurrected believers requires a Stoic framework, John 6:63 (and chapter 6 as a whole) points very strongly in the same direction.

With regard to what John says of Jesus, adopting the Stoic perspective immediately explains a query that seems to cry out for explanation: exactly how the *logos* "became" flesh. With a Platonic interpretation of John this event remains a mystery. (And of course scholars have been quite happy to see it as just that.) With a Stoic interpretation, by contrast, it makes immediate sense.

²⁶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ ζωοποιούν, ἡ σὰρξ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ οὐδέν. Gitte Buch-Hansen rightly takes this verse as one of the central props of her interpretation of the "meta-story of pneumatic transformations" in this gospel.

²⁷ πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν.

²⁸ σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται.

THE ENIGMA OF IMPERIAL CULTIC ACTIVITIES AND PAUL IN CORINTH

Bruce W. Winter

In 1972 Fergus Millar asked, "But when gentiles began to convert to Christianity, might we not expect that the pagan communities in which they lived would begin to use against them the accusation of not observing the Imperial cult?"¹ A decade later in a landmark monograph on the Imperial cult, Simon Price noted that "non-participation by Christians, whose communities were already very widespread in Asia Minor before Constantine, were deeply worrying to the rest of the population. Indeed the problem was already pressing to the assembly of the province of Asia under Hadrian [AD 117–138]."² What about the first Christians?

A further decade on Stephen Mitchell, in his extensive work on Anatolia, wrote about the enormous societal pressures that existed for early Christian converts to apostatize because of this imperial veneration:³

One cannot avoid the impression that the obstacle which stood in the way of the progress of Christianity, and the force which would have drawn new adherents back to conformity with the prevailing paganism, was the public worship of the emperors. The packed calendar of the ruler cult dragooned the citizens of [Pisidian] Antioch into observing the days, months, seasons and years which it laid down for special recognition and celebration. Its sacrifices were the chief source of meat which the Apostolic Council had forbidden. Christians could not (if they wanted to) conceal their beliefs and activities from their fellows, it was not a change of heart that might win a Christian convert back to paganism, but the overwhelming pressure to conform imposed by the institutions of his city and the activities of his neighbours.

¹ F. Millar, "The Imperial Cult and the Persecutions," in W. den Boer, *Le Culte des Souverains dans l'empire romain* (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1972) 163.

² S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 123–4, citing Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.8–9. See his chapter "Rituals and Power" in R.A. Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), ch. 3 where its nexus to the first generation of Christians is not explored.

³ S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 2.10.

While much interest has been generated in recent times in New Testament studies in the imperial cult, seeking to establish some nexus between its ideology and Christology, no answers have been forthcoming in response to the important questions raised by these ancient historians.

This is a critical issue for New Testament studies because in the past twenty-five years there has been a hive of activity in ancient history demonstrating just how important and how intrusive these cultic activities were in the lives of all ordinary citizens. They have shown just how involved citizens were in the many imperial high and holy days devoted to imperial veneration throughout the year in the Roman East and the Latin West.⁴

The Pontifical Biblical Institute for the past century has been a hub of research that has helped illuminate the biblical texts in their ancient settings. Therefore it seemed appropriate in this celebratory volume to explore in this chapter whether imperial cultic activities were not a problem for Paul and his early converts in Corinth, given that imperial veneration was alive and well in this capital of the province of Achaëa.

It is proposed to focus on (1) discussing primarily important official epigraphic evidence from Messene, a city in the province of Achaëa, of which Corinth was the capital, treating the very energetic promotion of imperial cultic celebrations by Publius Cornelius Scipio, a provincial official from Rome, (2) later inscriptions from Achaëa on celebrations associated with the accession of the emperors Tiberius and Gaius that provide further evidence that these activities continued and (3) detailing statues, epigraphic and numismatic evidence of local cultic activities in Corinth from its foundation as a Roman colony until a century afterwards. In the conclusion (4) the enigmatic question will be addressed suggesting why this movement did not raise immediate problems for the first Christians while Paul was founding the church in Corinth.

⁴ In addition to the work already cited, Duncan Fishwick since 1987 has published with E.J. Brill six of a projected twenty volumes on *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire*. S.J. Friesen, *Twice Neokoros: Ephesus, Asia and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), and in addition to his ground breaking work *Rituals and Power: The Imperial Cult and Asia Minor*, S.R.F. Price elsewhere contributed a chapter "Rituals and Power" in R.A. Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), ch. 3, but he, like Friesen, did not explore the issue for the first generation of Christians in the Julio-Claudian period.

IMPERIAL CULTIC ACTIVITIES IN ACHAEA IN 2 CE

Evidence for city-based imperial cultic events in Achaea is recorded half a century before Paul's arrival in Corinth. Fergus Millar, in referring briefly to an official inscription in Messene in the province of Achaea, wrote "[T]he games and sacrifices carried out for Augustus cast significant new light on the ceremonial and diplomatic aspects of the relations between Greek cities and the emperor."⁵ Simon Price sees it as the best documented case of a Roman governor enthusiastically promoting the imperial cult in any Roman province.⁶ It has been securely dated to early 2 CE.⁷

This official decree passed by the Council and People of the city of Messene profiles a number of highly informative features about imperial cultic activities. Publius Cornelius Scipio, a senior official from Rome and *de facto* governor of the province, himself organized these imperial cultic celebrations and spectacles in Messene celebrating and promoting divine veneration of Caesar Augustus and the Caesarean games. He had financed the enormous costs incurred in their promotion. He was also instrumental in facilitating similar imperial cultic celebrations in other leading cities in the province, as the inscription records "causing most of the cities in the province to do the same with him" (lines 9–10).

The Motivation of Scipio's Imperial Cult Involvement

Zetzel states "one would like very much to know why Scipio . . . is performing games and sacrifices in Greece, rather than letting the natives themselves honour the emperor."⁸ He opined that the only explanation as to why Scipio did this was "that the province of Achaea was so disorganized, without a κοινόν [province] and stricken with στάσις [discord], that official guidance was needed for any extraordinary festivals." He admits that this solution is "not really satisfactory" and that "this problem too awaits its solution."⁹

One could also well ask why it was that Pontius Pilate himself, who was a governor of Judaea under Tiberius, also erected a shrine in Caesarea Maritima, the capital of that province? It was inscribed "the temple of Tiberius, Marcus Pontius Pilate gave and dedicated" ([—]s *Tiberieum*

⁵ Fergus Millar "Two Augustan Notes," *CR* 18 (1968) 264–5.

⁶ Price, *Rituals and Power: The Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*, 70.

⁷ *SEG* (1968) XXIII, 206. For a discussion of this text and its dating see J.E.C. Zetzel, "New Light on Gaius Caesar's Eastern Campaign," *GRBS* 11 (1970) 263–66.

⁸ Zetzel, "New Light on Gaius Caesar's Eastern Campaign," 263.

⁹ Zetzel, "New Light on Gaius Caesar's Eastern Campaign," 263.

[.Po]ntius Pilatus [praef]ectus Iud[ae]e [dedit dedicavit]). There was already a very prominent imperial cult temple built by Herod to *Roma* and Augustus dominating this capital of Judaea,¹⁰ as Josephus noted, “Opposite the mouth of the harbour, on a height, stood the temple of Caesar, of distinctive beauty and grand proportions; it contained a colossal statue of the emperor, not inferior to Olympian Zeus... and another to Rome, rivalling that of Hera at Argos.”¹¹

Pilate secretly brought imperial portraits to Jerusalem and dedicated golden shields to Tiberius—“with the object of doing honour to Tiberius” according to Philo¹²—ignoring the Jews’ “ancient traditions” (*mos maiorum*) but was forced to remove them following enormous protests from the Jews.¹³ They were set up in the temple of Augustus on the orders of Tiberius, yet he erected a shrine to him in Caesarea. As the editors of the inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima suggest, it was for “instant shows of loyalty to the emperor” especially with the enormous effect of the fall of Sejanus in Rome in 31 CE.¹⁴

In the colony of Africa, whose capital, Carthage, was founded as a Roman colony at the same time as Corinth, Q. Marcius Barea, its proconsul in 41–43 CE was involved in imperial cultic activities. He was the dedicator of the shrine to *Diva Augusta* when the Senate formally deified Livia in January, 42 and constructed a building to Claudius as well as a small temple to *Di Augusti*.¹⁵ J.B. Rives concludes that this evidence “suggests that Barea may have had a personal interest in promoting the imperial cult, but does not indicate either the exercise of a particular religious authority or an institutionalized role in the foundation of imperial cults.”¹⁶

Paulus Fabius Maximus, the governor of Asia, was instrumental in promoting a competition for a new calendar for the province in honour of Augustus that resulted in the calendar being changed so that the emperor’s birthday was declared to be the beginning of the New Year in that

¹⁰ For the most recent discussion see J.E. Taylor, “Pontius Pilate and the Imperial Cult in Roman Judaea,” *NTS* 52 (2006) 564–6.

¹¹ Josephus, *B.J.* 1.414.

¹² Philo, *Legum*, 299.

¹³ Josephus, *B.J.*, 2.168–74.

¹⁴ C.M. Lehmann and K.G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima* (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2000) no. 43 and discussion on 67–70.

¹⁵ *ILAlg*, ii, 550, *CIL* 11002, and J.M. Reynolds and J.B. Ward-Perkins, *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* (Rome: British School at Rome, 1952) no. 273.

¹⁶ J.B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) 81–2.

province, around 9–6 BCE.¹⁷ The governor was awarded a gold benefaction crown by the province for this means of flattering the emperor.

Publius Celerius, also a governor of Asia is commemorated in a bilingual inscription: “procurator of the god Claudius and of Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, he set up the base of this monument, and the statues from his funds, and dedicated them.”¹⁸ The four metre long base bore two statues, presumably imperial ones.

The view that the proconsuls’ task was primarily exercising the *impe-rium*, largely in criminal courts, may need some modification. In Roman law “it was the duty of a governor to inspect sacred temples and public works alike to ensure that they were completed, if begun, and kept in repair once constructed.”¹⁹ Yet there clearly are instances where they went beyond that duty by encouraging imperial veneration. P. Cornelius Scipio, P. Fabius Maximus and Q. Marcius Barea and possibly Publius Cererius all exceeded their “legal” remit by taking these initiatives in promoting the cult. So it was not just leading provincial citizens or resident Roman businessmen who did this,²⁰ and Scipio’s endeavours were not an isolated occurrence.

What is actually recorded of Scipio in Messene? He was portrayed in the inscription as totally loyal and zealous “having been endowed with unsurpassed goodwill towards Augustus, and his whole house, he has made a very great and highly honorific vow, to preserve him [Augustus] safe for all time, as is shown by his deeds on every occasion” (lines 3–7).

The official resolution of Messene itself notes that Scipio assiduously undertook three highly significant moves relating to the imperial family. We discover from the inscription that (1) he offered up sacrifices to Augustus, lavishly sponsored personally the Caesarea games and persuaded other cities to do exactly the same, (2) when he learnt that Gaius,

¹⁷ R.K. Sherck, *Rome and the Greek East to the Death of Augustus* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), no. 101 (ca. 9–6 BCE).

¹⁸ R.A. Kearsley and T.V. Evans, *Greeks and Romans in Imperial Asia: Mixed Language Inscriptions and Linguistic Evidence for Cultural Interaction until the End of AD III*, *Inchriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*, 59 (Bonn: Habelt, 2001) no. 156.

¹⁹ Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage*, 82 and n. 131, citing Ulpian, *Digest*, 1.16. 7. 1.

²⁰ “To Roma and to Imperator Caesar, son of the god, Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, holder of the tribunician power for the nineteenth time, to their own saviour (τῷ ἰδίῳ σωτῆρι), the Milyadeis and the Roman businessmen among them and the Thracians living among them dedicated this.” G.H.R. Horsley, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions in the Burdur Archaeological Museum*, The British Institute at Ankara, no. 34 (London: British Institute at Ankara, 2007) no. 328.

the adopted son of Augustus and an appointed heir, had defeated dangerous enemies, he marked the occasion with provincial-wide imperial cultic victory celebrations personally offering up a sacrifice to the gods for his safety and sponsoring lavish festivals, and (3) he actually altered the imperial calendar, deducting two days from Augustus' festival and replacing them henceforth with sacrifices and celebrations on the anniversary when Gaius was first elected consul.

Sacrifices to Augustus and Celebrating the Caesarean Games

Secretary of the Council was Philoxenidas in the magistracy of Theodoros. Decree: Since Publius Cornelius Scipio, *quaestor pro praetoriano*, being endowed with unexcelled goodwill toward Augustus and all his house, having made one great and highly honorific vow to guard him against all harm, as displayed by his deeds on each occasion conducting the Caesarea [τὰ Καισάρεια] and sparing neither expense [ἐνλείπων] nor honour (φιλοτιμία), nor the thanksgiving to the gods for the sacrifices to Augustus at the same time [μηδὲ τὰς ὑπὲρ τὰν διὰ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ θυσιᾶν εὐχαριστίας ποτὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ἅμα], and preparing the great cities of the province (καὶ τὰς πλείστας τῶν κατὰ τὰν ἐπαρχίαν πόλεων) ready to do the very same thing along with him [σὺν ἑαυτῷ τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιεῖν κατασκευασάμενος] (lines 1–10).²¹

There was “the thanksgiving for the sacrifice “to” (διὰ) Augustus” and “to the gods at the same time” (ποτὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ἅμα), lines 8–9. How to render the phrase διὰ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ is a critical issue for understanding one imperial cultic practice. Millar states that the sacrifice was “for Augustus,” as does Sherk, both of whom do so without comment.²² Fishwick is uncertain and inserts a question mark but without pursuing the matter that the city was “celebrating lavishly the festival of the Caesarea with sacrifices for (?) Augustus.”²³ Zetzel in his translation renders this phrase “to Augustus” without justification.²⁴ Price makes no specific observation concerning this phrase but refers to it in an important section of his book dealing with sacrifices to the emperor, that make good deficiencies in our knowledge of this aspect of the imperial cultic activities.²⁵ It is contingent upon a

²¹ SEG XXIII 206 and R.K. Sherk (ed. and trans.), *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988) no. 18. See Zetzel, “New Light on Gaius Caesar’s Eastern Campaign,” 259–60 with corrections of earlier editions. A further correction is suggested in line 9 as the subsequent discussion will argue.

²² F. Millar “Two Augustan Notes,” CR 18 (1968) 264 and Sherk, *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian*, 33.

²³ Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 2.1, 514.

²⁴ Zetzel, “New Light on Gaius Caesar’s Eastern Campaign,” 260.

²⁵ Price, “Sacrifices,” *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*, ch. 8 and p. 70 for the importance he attaches to the evidence in this inscription under the subheading “A system of exchange,” 65ff.

grammatical construction in Doric Greek—Pausanias c. 150 CE noted of the Messenians “even to our day they have retained the purest Doric in the Peloponnese.”²⁶

In order to understand the sacrifices in relation to Augustus, a number of points need to be noted about the actual phrases used for divine sacrifices and veneration to others in this inscription. Also in the inscription is a reference to a sacrifice “for (περί) the safety of Gaius with an ox” l. 15 and another “to be made on behalf of Gaius” (ὑπὲρ Γαίου θυσιᾶν ποιήσασθαι) to celebrate annually the date of his appointment as a consul in Rome” (line 18).

The term “for” (περί) is used of sacrifices for Gaius and another for his safety, “on behalf of” (ὑπὲρ), but neither are used with respect to “the thanksgiving” (τᾷς . . . εὐχαριστίας) “to the gods” (ποτὶ τοὺς θεοὺς) in relation to Augustus” (line 8). In the case of the thanksgiving “to” (ποτὶ) the gods the use in Doric Greek of ποτὶ is the same in Classical and the equivalent in Κοινή to πρὸς followed by the accusative, hence the appropriate rendering of the phrase as “thanksgiving to the god.”²⁷

Why was not “for” (ὑπὲρ) used if the sacrifice being noted was to the gods “for” Augustus in line 8? The actual phrase in line 8 “the sacrifice διὰ Augustus” (τᾶν διὰ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ θυσιᾶν) cannot refer to Augustus’ actual involvement in sacrifices performed in Achaia in his role of *pontifex maximus* in Rome itself. Nor was the reference “concerning” him to others gods, for this occurs in the context of “thanksgiving to the gods.” Within the same inscription one would expect the same construction when referring to an identical activity.

How then are we to understand the role of διὰ in relation to the phrase concerning Augustus? Buck noted that in the Doric dialect διὰ tends to be used not only with the concept of time but also of “the matter or person involved.”²⁸ When it is used with verbs of direction, the genitive indicates

²⁶ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 4.27.11. For the most recent discussion of Doric see J. Méndez Dosuna, “The Doric Dialects,” A.-F. Christidis (ed.), *A History of Ancient Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) Part III, ch. 7. On Doric in Messenia, see Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 4.27.11; J.M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 180; S.E. Alcock, “The Peculiar Book IV and the Problem of the Messenian Past,” in S.E. Alcock, J.F. Cherry and J. Elsner (eds.), *Pausanias: Travel and memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 293, n. 29 quoting from this section in Pausanias that even Dispora Messenians “did not lose their Doric dialect.”

²⁷ Méndez Dosuna, “The Doric Dialects,” 450; cf. the classical Greek of Polybius, 1.36.1.2–3: διὰ τε τῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐχαριστίας, cited by Liddell, Scott, Jones and Mackenzie, *Greek English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925).

²⁸ C.D. Buck, *Introduction to the Study of the Greek Dialects* (2nd ed.; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1955) 136–7.

the object aimed at, and here the verb “to omit” (ἐλείπειν) was used to convey the fact that Scipio was sparing neither expense, nor display nor thanksgiving for the sacrifice directed “to” Augustus.

This cultic act was not without a parallel. In that in the same year, 2 BCE in Neapolis, the port of Philippi, Imperial Games were instituted in honour of Roma and Augustus and all the inhabitants. The people were commanded “you must go to the temple of Augustus” (ἀγέτωσαν τὸ Καισαρεῖον) and later a reference to making “sacrificing to Augustus Caesar” (θύσαντες Σεβαστῷ Καίσαρι).²⁹

How should we understand the reference in ἅμα καί “at the same time” (line 9)? The usual translation reverses the order “and at the same time” preparing also the great cities of the province to do the same (lines 9–10) as Scipio was doing. If that was the sense, then the translation would be “at the same time even causing most of the cities in the province to do the same” which seems unlikely.

There is another example in the case of the speech Aelius Aristides delivered to the imperial court in Rome in 155 CE. He noted a person “stands up, praises and reverences him [the emperor]” (ἀλλ’ ἀναστὰς ὑμνεῖ καὶ σέβει) “and offers a twofold prayer” (καὶ συνεύχεται διπλὴν εὐχήν) “on the one hand to the gods on the emperor’s behalf” (τὴν μὲν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τοῖς θεοῖς) “and on the other concerning his personal affairs to the emperor himself” (τὴν δὲ αὐτῷ ἐκεῖνῳ περὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ).³⁰ In such a formal setting of the imperial court he saw no inconsistency in declaring the “twofold” (διπλός) cultic activity for the emperor and to the emperor. It was not just two prayers, otherwise δύο would have been the appropriate term to use.

Therefore, the Messene inscription would not be unique with its thanksgiving to the gods, while at the same time offering a sacrifice to Augustus. This seems possible taking into account the word order to render “the thanksgiving for the sacrifice to Augustus to the gods at the same time” (μηδὲ τὰς ὑπὲρ τᾶν διὰ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ θυσιᾶν ποτὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ἅμα) because of the phrase τᾶν διὰ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ θυσιᾶν being located between the article τὰς and εὐχαριστίας to the gods. Scipio is undertaking multiple cultic

²⁹ W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, *Die Inschriften von Olympia*, vol. 5 of *Olympia: Die Ergebnisse der von dem deutschen Reich veranstalteten Ausgrabung, im Auftrage des königlich preussischen Ministers der geistlichen, unterrichts- und medicinal-angelegenheiten*, ed. E. Curtius, et al. (Berlin: A. Asher & Co., 1896) no. 56, lines 48, 52. I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002) 82, notes that in the Neapolis inscription reference was made not only to a temple to Caesar but also to games and it “mentions a sacrifice to Augustus.”

³⁰ Aelius Aristides, *Oration*, 26.32.

activities in Messene and of course is using his efforts as a paradigm and incentive for other leading cities in Achaea to do the same, as the next section of the inscription indicates.

It is concluded that the reference in the Messene inscription is to the giving of thanks to the other gods and sacrifices offered “to Augustus” at the same time. Scipio, we are told, did this on “every occasion,” i.e., on the days of Caesar’s festival, he performed the Caesarea (τὰ Καισάρεια) without falling short (*l.* 7). This is in keeping with what is known elsewhere concerning cultic activities.³¹

New Sacrifices for Gaius, the Son and a Heir of Augustus

... and when he learned that Gaius, the son of Augustus [υἱὸς τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ], involved in battle against the barbarians on behalf of all men, was in good health, had escaped the dangers, and had taken vengeance on the enemy, with exuberant joy at this best news [ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀρίσταις ἀγγελίαις] he directed all both to wear wreathes and to sacrifice [στεφαναφορεῖν τε πάντοis διέταξε καὶ θύειν] on “undisturbed” holidays, and he himself both sacrificed an ox for the safety of Gaius [αὐτὸς τε βοθυτῶν περὶ τῆς Γαίου σωτηρίας] and was lavish in various spectacles, so that what took place rivalled what had come before those given in the past, on the one hand, but on the other hand, the solemnity remained balanced (lines 10–17).

Significantly for our purposes there were different imperial sacrifices described in this one inscription. It records sacrifices to the gods “for” (περὶ) the safety of Gaius” (line 15)—the sacrifice of an ox was very much a Roman custom—and sacrifices on behalf of (ὑπέρ) Gaius (line 18).

Gaius, a named successor of Augustus, was a central focus for the promotion of the cultic celebrations in this province. Dio records that “Agrippa again acknowledged the birth of a son who was named Lucius; Augustus immediately adopted him together with his brother Gaius, not waiting for them to become men, but appointing them then and there successors in his office, in order that fewer plots might be formed against him.”³²

³¹ It is more accurate to refer to imperial cultic activities rather than the imperial cult, as it consisted of prayers and sacrifices to the gods for the emperor, the same to the emperor and the emperor undertaking similar activities to the gods for the empire. T. Hillard, “Vespasian’s Death-bed Attitude to his Impending Deification,” in M. Dillon (ed.), *Religion in the Ancient World: New Themes and Approaches* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1996) 197–8, n. 33 and D. Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, I.1, 33. See *IGR* IV 1756, an inscription in Sardis at the same time as that of Messene, also concerning Gaius, with the threefold cultic activities.

³² Dio, *Roman History*, 54.18.1.

The fact that Scipio was very well connected in Rome and understood Augustus' aspirations for Gaius, explains one of his three acts being rigorously promoted in this decree. There was the sacrifice for the safety of Gaius against enemies of the empire, because he was a successor of Augustus. The nexus between political loyalty to Augustus and his household and imperial cultic activities aimed at preserving their safety was spelt out for all to see.

A similar inscription in Koine Greek from Sardis also makes reference to the two imperial cultic practices concerning prayers offered "to Augustus for his [Gaius'] safety" (ὕπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας), "sacrifice for Gaius to the gods for his [Gaius'] safety" (ὕπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας) with "most splendid sacrifices performed to the gods (θυσίας τοῖς θεοῖς ἐκπρεπεστάτας ἐπιτελέσαι)."³³

In concluding the discussion of this segment of the inscription there emerges a particular feature that is important for the first Christians. Who were expected to participate in these celebrations in Achaëa? Scipio "directed all inhabitants both to wear wreathes and to sacrifice" (στεφαναφορεῖν τε πάντοις διέταξε καὶ θύειν) to celebrate Gaius' escape from danger (lines 13–14). He specifies not only that all were to wear crowns and offer sacrifices, but that in future all would keep themselves "free from work," i.e., "undisturbed" (ἀπράφμονος), *l.* 14 for the anniversary of Gaius' entry to the consulship. The celebrations were not just for the ruling élite but for all citizens in the provincial cities on imperial high days. Scipio's decision to "feature" Gaius is explicable as honours were bestowed on him not only in Rome but also in Sardis.³⁴

Altering the Calendar Celebrating Imperial Days

... and he made a great effort, in leaving two days from the days of Augustus' festival and made the beginning of the sacrifices on behalf Gaius [τὰν ἀρχάν τῶν ὑπὲρ Γαίου θυσιῶν ποιήσασθαι] from the day on which for the first time he was designated consul and he also instructed us to annually celebrate this day on each day with sacrifices and the wearing of wreaths as graciously and [-----] as we can; and therefore the council-members decreed on the fifteenth day before the Kalends of [-----] (lines 17–21).

Scipio not only commanded annual sacrifices but he actually adjusted the imperial calendar in the province deducting "two days from the days of Augustus." It was done in order to mark the beginning "of the sacrifices for

³³ *IGR IV* 1756, lines 9, 11–12, 15.

³⁴ For Rome, see Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 2.1, 483–4.

Gaius from the day on which for the first time he [Gaius] was designated consul" (lines 16–17). He also "instructed us" (διετάξατο ἡμῖν), line 19, i.e. to set these in place like the setting up of an army for battle, giving authority to do this annually (διάγειν ὅσοις δυνάμεθα, line 20), "and for us to celebrate this on each day" (διετάξατο δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ καθ' ἑκάστον ἐνιαυτὸν τὰν ἀμέραν ταύταν διαγειν).³⁵ As Scipio has taken them from the existing imperial cultic celebration days, the significance of the instruction is that on both days the celebration is that of Gaius securing the office of consul in Rome.

Elsewhere Gaius was feted with "the Games of the Imperial Family established for Gaius Caesar (victor) in the Isthmian boys stadium-race and pentathlon on the same day" around the same period and on the island of Cos.³⁶ Corinth had minted a coin with Gaius and Lucius facing each and on the obverse side an image of Augustus inscribed "Caesar, Corinth" dated around the same period, i.e., 2–1 BCE.³⁷

Scipio used his office in Achaëa to see the cult promoted and firmly established province-wide, for we are told he was "also causing most of the cities of the province (τὰς πλείστας τῶν κατὰ τὰν ἐπαρχίαν πόλεων) to do the same thing with him" (lines 10–11). It gives an indication of what occurred during some of the celebrations: "sacrifices and crown-wearing" (θυσία and στεφαναφορία) "as graciously and . . . as we can" (lines 19–20). It was not to be done "theatrically," so that the balance between spectacles and solemnity was disturbed, but with appropriate decorum, as had been the case in Scipio's celebration of the victory (line 17).

There is a reference in the imperial calendar, literally "the days of Caesar's festival" (τὰν Καίσαρος ἀμερῶν), and Scipio took two out of the calendar replacing them with those celebrating Gaius' consularship.³⁸

This inscription also testifies to the fact that cities were already celebrating the imperial holy days before these innovations of Scipio. As we

³⁵ Zetzel's translation of the final extant sentence in the inscription is "he instructed us to observe this day annually," but it does not bring out the point that it was to be observed over the two days set aside in the calendar for Gaius' anniversary. For the same phrase in classical Greek, see Isocrates, *Oration*, 1.2, 211 "every single day" (καθ' ἑκάστην τὴν ἡμέραν).

³⁶ *SIG*³ 1065 (Cos).

³⁷ A. Burnett, M. Amandry and Pere Pau Ripollès, *Roman Provincial Coinage: From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius* (44 B.C.-A.D. 69) (London and Paris: British Museum Press and Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1998) no. 1136 hereafter cited *RPC*. For a list of cities in the empire where coins were struck with Gaius and Lucius, the joint heirs, see *RPC*, 733.

³⁸ *CIL* 10, 8375 Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 2.1, 490. cf. The Calendar of Cumae (4–14 CE).

shall see, there is early evidence in Corinth of the veneration of Julius Caesar and Augustus. What emerges from this Messene inscription is that it was an official from Rome who greatly enhanced existing celebrations and cultic activities. It shows that in spite of any formal imperial “declining of temples” that might occur, the veneration of the emperor on designated holidays was not only a city initiative in the Roman East. It also sets the scene for future celebrations in the province.

Subsequent to this inscription being erected, Gaius would be fatally wounded and die in 4 CE in Lycia. His brother, Lucius, would suffer a similar fate in battle. A decree from Pisae in Etruria marked the deep sense of mourning empire-wide and the fixing of their anniversary. That day was to be observed as “a day of grief and so marked down (in the calendar)” and that “all should change into mourning clothes, that the temples of the immortal gods and public baths and taverns should all be closed.”³⁹ This was in stark contrast to the joyful celebration with the wearing of wreaths and offering sacrifices Scipio decreed here for Achaëa.

In conclusion the Messene inscription contains a wealth of information about imperial cultic activities, all of which resonate with what is known elsewhere about imperial cultic ideology. There are sacrifices to the emperor, thanksgiving to the gods for him and also annual sacrifices for one of the emperor’s adopted sons and a named successor in all the major cities in the province, not least of all its capital. All the inhabitants of Achaëa were to participate in the celebratory activities of the games and imperial cultic veneration.

THE ACCESSION OF TIBERIUS AND GAIUS

In Messene where Scipio had so assiduously promoted imperial cultic activities c. 1 CE, on the accession of Tiberius in 14 CE, an extant decree of its inhabitants records the celebration of the accession of Tiberius with imperial cultic activities for “all those who live in the city.”

For divine Caesar Augustus and Tiberius Caesar Augustus... [lead]... all those who live in the city... leisure for three consecutive days, to celebrate contests—a gymnastic one for the children and the *ephebes*, and an equestrian one for the *neoi*—on the anniversary, and the victors’ weapons to be dedicated by the priest of that year, and to send an embassy to Rome to the emperor Tiberius Caesar. This (embassy) is to deplore that the god is

³⁹ CIL XI 1421, translated in Sherck, *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian*, no. 19.

no longer manifest among us, to greet the emperor Tiberius and to rejoice together that he who is worthy, according to our wish, has become the ruler of the entire world and also to lament bitterly the adversities that have overcome the city, and to supplicate so that we may obtain some mercy.⁴⁰

The local celebrations related to the apotheosis of “the divine Caesar Augustus,” i.e. the god in heaven, and Tiberius. In addition there was to be the embassy to mourn “the god no longer manifest among us,” to honour and to recognise Tiberius who rules the entire world and with it to seek some redress concerning an unknown incident related to the city’s enemies. Here is an inscription that makes it clear that there were to be three days of imperial celebrations, the equivalent to “on undisturbed days” as in the Scipio inscription and also involved “all who live in the city.”

That such an embassy should also make reference to “the adversities that have overcome the city” may seem entirely inappropriate at a time of the celebration of an accession of a new emperor, but delegations came to Rome also seeking concessions. Prior to 15 CE Achaea had been administered as a province by the Senate, but because of a revolt at the end of the principate of Augustus, to which this inscription alludes, Tiberius took over its administration.⁴¹ Lendon, in his monograph *Empire of Honour*, discusses at length the issues of “reciprocity” and the fact that embassies came with requests at the accession of an emperor was no breach of protocol.⁴²

We not only have details as to how the ascension of Tiberius was marked, but know that an imperial decree was sent endorsing their imperial cultic celebration for his successor, Gaius, with a similar request. In this instance it permits them to meet again as a league.

The rescript of Gaius to the Pan-Hellenic league of the Achaeans, Boeotians, Locrians, Phocians and Euboeans:

I have read the decree given to me by your ambassadors and have recognized that you have spared no extravagance in our zeal and devotion to me, in that you have both each personally offered a sacrifice for my security and have joined in a common festival and decreed the greatest honours you could; for all this I both praise you all (ἐφ’ οἷς ἅπασι ἐπαινῶ ὑμᾶς) and give my approval. And remembering the distinction from ancient times of each of

⁴⁰ SEG XXXIX (1989) 378.

⁴¹ Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.76.2. The administration of Achaea was restored to the Senate in 44 CE (Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 40.24.1).

⁴² J.E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 168.

the Greek republics, I permit you to meet as a league. But as for the statues you voted me, if you please, reduce the great number and be content with those that will be placed at Olympus and Nemea and at the Pythian sanctuary and at the Isthmus. By doing this you will [venerate me] and burden yourself less with expense.⁴³

This very important imperial rescript records the action by all citizens within the Achaean League on the accession of the successor of Tiberius. Corinth was part of this league. Each person sacrificed personally for the new emperor, Gaius' safety—"in that each one of you have both personally (ἰδίᾳ τε ἕκαστος) offered a sacrificing for my security" (θυσάμενοι ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας) and joined in the common festival (καὶ κοινῇ ἑορτάσαντες)—hence his praise for all.⁴⁴ We can assume that this also applied to the same individual and corporate activities which would occur on the occasion of the accession of Claudius in 41 CE.

IMPERIAL CULTIC VENERATION IN ROMAN CORINTH⁴⁵

Aulus Gellius observed that colonies were "offshoots of Rome, with their laws and customs dependent on the Roman people."⁴⁶ We know that Corinth was the centre for the promotion of Romanization in Achaea. As Spawforth notes "the colony's assertive *Romanitas* in the early Principate is one of its most striking features."⁴⁷

What is known of imperial cultic activities in Corinth? It was soon after Julius Caesar authorized Corinth's foundation as a Roman colony in

⁴³ IG VII, 2711.

⁴⁴ IG VII, 2711, lines 26–7.

⁴⁵ R. DeMaris, "Cults and the Imperial Cult in Early Roman Corinth: Literary *Versus* Material Record," in M. Labahn and J. Zangenberg (eds.), *Zwischen den Reichen: Neues Testament und römische Herrschaft: Vorträge auf der ersten Konferenz der European Association for Biblical Studies*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter, 36 (Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2002) 73–91. In spite of the title of the essay and his justified criticisms of a catalogue of inappropriate attempts to tie archaeological evidence to 1 Corinthians, he devotes only two paragraphs to the imperial cult and then only to the identifying of Temple E with the cult.

⁴⁶ Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 16.13.

⁴⁷ A.J.S. Spawforth, "Roman Corinth: The Formation of a Colonial Élite" in A.D. Rizakis (ed.), *Roman Onomastics in the Greek: East Social and Political Aspects*, Μελεθρημα 21 (Athens: Kentron Hellēnikēs kai Rōmaikēs Archaiotētōs, Ethnikon Hidryma Ereunōn; Paris: Diffusion de Bocard, 1996) 175. The term *Romanitas* is to be avoided, even though it has recently gained currency among some ancient historians. The term is not found in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* which cites works occurring in sources up to 200 CE. I owe this observation to Professor E.A. Judge. The first occurrence of this term I could locate is in Tertullian (ca. 155–230 CE), "On the Pallium," 4, where he used it pejoratively to describe those in Carthage who "aped" Roman culture.

44 BCE that he was assassinated and subsequently deified by the Roman Senate. The veneration of Julius Caesar was recorded in Corinth on a grey marble block found in the theatre “sacred to the deified Julius Caesar” (*divo Ivlio Caesari [sacrum]*).⁴⁸ Similar inscriptions have been found to the “to the deified Augustus” (*divo Augusto*),⁴⁹ and “to the deified Augusta, the grandmother of [Tiberius] Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus’ (*divae Augustae avae Ti. Claudi Caesaris Augusti Germanici*).⁵⁰

Corinthian Imperial Cultic Sites

The second-century CE traveller to Corinth, Pausanius, recorded “above the market place is a temple of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, who was emperor of the Romans after Caesar, the founder of present Corinth.”⁵¹ A coin issued in Corinth shows the altar of the imperial cult centered on a court.⁵² One interesting feature of this temple is that it was not built at ground level but on foundations that were raised to some ten feet.⁵³ It therefore stood higher than the ancient Greek temple of Apollo that was the only structure the Roman colonists preserved from Greek Corinth. However, this temple was changed internally to conform with Roman temple design because Augustus had attributed his major victory at Actium to this god.⁵⁴

It is suggested that the temple of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, who had also been deified in Athens was the focus of Corinth’s imperial cultic activity. Mary Walbank however has argued against this as its site, relegating its activities to a minor temple that stood alongside other small temples at the south end of the Roman forum.⁵⁵ Charles Williams II, the

⁴⁸ J.H. Kent, *Inscriptions 1926-1950* (Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Vol. 8, Part 3; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), no. 50.

⁴⁹ Kent, *Inscriptions 1926-1950*, nos. 51-53.

⁵⁰ Kent, *Inscriptions 1926-1950*, no. 56.

⁵¹ Pausanius, *Description of Greece*, 2.3.1. For Octavia’s deification in Athens see A.E. Raubitschek, “Octavia’s Deification at Athens,” *TAPA* 77 (1946) 146-50 and K.W. Arafat, *Pausanias’ Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 108.

⁵² Fishwick, *Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 3.3, 112, n. 26 citing M.J. Price and B.L. Trell, *Coins and their Cities* (London and Detroit: Vecchi and Wayne State University, 1977) 219, no. 479 (161-8 CE).

⁵³ Having stood on the raised section it is clear to me that it was intended to be higher than that of Apollo and tower over the official Roman forum.

⁵⁴ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 70; Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 1.1, 81.

⁵⁵ M. Walbank, “Pausanias, Octavia, Temple E,” *Annual of the British School at Athens* 84 (1989) 361-94. She argues it was the Capitoline, but Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2.4.5 records in Corinth that “above the theatre is a sanctuary to Zeus surnamed in the Latin tongue *Capitolinus*.”

former Director of the Corinth Excavations of the American School of Classical Studies, has rejected her proposal for the location of the imperial cult celebrations other than in the Octavian temple.⁵⁶

Cognizance should also be taken of the fact that in the East imperial temples dominated commercial and civic centre of cities, as was the case in the Roman forum in Athens in relation to its famous ancient Greek agora. The former was built higher than the latter and the imperial cult temple in the former was the highest point, higher than the renovated temple of Apollo.⁵⁷ Mitchell noted that in Anatolia imperial temples were also built in the most central and conspicuous location in the civic space.⁵⁸ This is certainly true in Ephesus where Domitian's temple and its important imperial predecessors occupied the highest point in the city towering over an official *agora* and the rest of the city.⁵⁹

Pompeii, a Roman colony in Italy, provides an example of more than one imperial cult temple in the forum and its surrounds. Among the extant remains, a temple can be seen dedicated to the *Genius* of Augustus, next to it an imperial cult temple, and, adjoining that, a market (*marcellum*) with a sanctuary to the imperial family at the far end. A block away the remains of a temple to the *Fortuna* of Augustus are in the same road. Given the extent of imperial cultic sites in Pompeii, it is unnecessary to postulate that there was only one such temple in the forum in Corinth.

Charles Williams II argues that "the escalation of the Imperial Cult in Corinth from the time of Tiberius onwards" resulted in the reconstruction of Temple E and its considerable enhancement.⁶⁰ It may not have been the only one dedicated to the imperial veneration in Corinth. There were other temples in front of it, lower in the forum whose use cannot be definitely established.

It would be strange indeed if the dominant temple in Roman Corinth was bypassed on high and holy imperial cult days, for celebrations to be

⁵⁶ C.K. Williams II, "A Re-evaluation of Temple E and the West End of the Forum," in S. Walker and A. Cameron (eds.), *The Greek Renaissance in the Roman Empire*, BICS Supplement 55 (London: 1989) 156–162.

⁵⁷ In the case of Athens the Roman forum was built separately and higher than the Greek *agora* so that it looked down on it. The imperial cult temple is the highest point in that forum.

⁵⁸ S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 1.100.

⁵⁹ Paul R. Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004) 35–7.

⁶⁰ C.K. Williams II, "The Refounding of Corinth: Some Roman Religious Attitudes," in S. Macready and F.S. Thompson (eds.), *Roman Architecture in the Greek World*, The Society of Antiquities, Occasional Papers 10 (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1987) 30.

held in front of one of the extremely small temples in the forum thought to be dedicated to imperial veneration. Certainly the very large forecourt surrounding the Octavian temple would have enabled imperial cult feasts to be celebrated there.

This imperial veneration took place in the midst of enormous celebrations in late 54 CE by the ancient Achaean League involving leading dignitaries from the cities. It would have been inconceivable that it would have been celebrated in the forum before any of the extremely small temples that stood in front of the raised imperial cult temple and its very spacious precinct that dominated Corinth's forum. Mary Walbank's thesis has yet to address the implications of this major innovation.⁶¹

In addition, there are coins minted in Corinth that feature two temple types. One type has a hexastyle temple on a mountain, i.e., Acrocorinth,⁶² and another example replicates one with its six columns.⁶³ The second type, a tetrastyle temple with steps leading up to it, is seen from the corner and is the raised temple that is at the end of the forum.⁶⁴ A coin from Nero's principate shows him standing in the middle of four columns, celebrating his famous visit to Corinth where he pronounced the abolition of taxes for Greece—a much celebrated event, associated with honours bestowed on him for winning all the events in the Isthmian games which he entered.⁶⁵

This numismatic evidence further supports Williams' identification of Temple E as the one used for imperial cultic activities. Its large precinct was such as enabled a Christian to observe another "reclining in the idol temple" (ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον) (1 Cor 8:10).⁶⁶

Corinthian Statues of the Divine Family

In the Julian Basilica in Corinth where court cases were heard, there was found the greatest concentration of extant imperial statues apart from

⁶¹ She continued arguing for her position in "Evidence for the Imperial Cult in Julio-Claudian Corinth," A. Small (ed.), *Subject and Ruler: The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity, Papers Honouring D. Fishwick*, JRA Supplement 17 (Ann Arbor: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1996) 201–13.

⁶² *RPC*, no. 1180 (Claudius).

⁶³ *RPC*, no. 1151 and 1157 (Tiberius).

⁶⁴ *RPC*, no. 1218–21 (Galba).

⁶⁵ *RPC*, no. 1208 (Nero). See *RPC*, no. 1207–9 for coins issued by the magistrates T. Claudius Anaxilaus and Ventidius (67–8 CE), recording his visit and portraying his laureate head.

⁶⁶ *κατάκειμαι* means "recline at a meal."

the theatre. Statues of the deceased heirs of Augustus, Gaius and Lucius, portrayed as gods, were located together with a dedication to the imperial family living and deceased.⁶⁷ It is not unexpected that after the death of both Gaius and Lucius, statues of them were erected in Corinth.

Their portrayal without clothes indicates that they are now to be seen as gods in the guise and posture conventionally assigned to Hermes.⁶⁸ As Hallett in his discussion of "The Nudity of the Gods" concluded, "The emperors never appear nude . . . When nude or partly nude figures do occur in the *genre*, they are immediately identified as gods."⁶⁹ This would be no less true of the adopted sons of Augustus, given what is known of the honouring of Gaius from the Messene inscription discussed in detail in the first section of this chapter.⁷⁰ Scotton has concluded in the light of the imperial statues and an inscription located there to the *Caesares Augusti*—a clear reference to the living and deceased emperors in Corinth—that there is "the presence of some manifestation of the imperial cult" also in the Julian Basilica.⁷¹

Corinthian Imperial Cult Priests and Monuments

As a Roman colony there were aspects of the cult in Corinth that differed from its celebration in Greek cities of the province. Only in a Roman colony could freedmen be eligible to become priests of Augustus (*Augustales*) and designated *flamines*.⁷² There are a number of extant inscriptions in Corinth naming the priests of the local imperial cult "To [----], priest of [----] and priest of the Tutela Augusta. The colony awarded a golden crown [----]. The *Augustales* (dedicated this monument)." An inscription has been located, dedicated to a priestess in Corinth, in the principate of Augustus. Callicratea, daughter of Phileus, was a "priestess in perpetuity of Augustan Providence and Public Safety" (*Providentiae Aug. et Salutis Publicae*). The

⁶⁷ P.D. Scotton, "A New Fragment of an Inscription from the Julian Basilica at Roman Corinth," *Hesperia* 74.1 (2005) 99–100.

⁶⁸ E.H. Swift, "Imperial Portraits at Corinth," *AJA*, 25.4, (1921) 336.

⁶⁹ C.H. Hallett, "The Nudity of the Gods," *Roman Nudity: Heroic Portrait Statuary 200 BC–AD 300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 223–4.

⁷⁰ In Aphrodisias in the Sebasteion leading to the Imperial Cult temple there is a frieze with a naked Claudius as emperor holding the hand of Agrippina. An Ephesian coin was struck with the heads of Claudius and Agrippina the Younger facing each other with the inscription "marriage of gods" (θεογαμία) on the obverse side and on the reverse side there was a statue of Artemis with the word "Ephesian" indicating its provenance, *RPC*, no. 2620.

⁷¹ Scotton, "A New Fragment," 99–100.

⁷² Price, *Rituals and Power*, 88.

Corinthian tribe of Agrippia erected this to “to one who well deserves this” (*bene merita*), Callicratea. “[Diana] Bringer of the Light of Peace, Augusta, a dedication, for the safety of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, Licinius . . . freedman of Publius . . . Philosebastus, had this made at his own expense.”⁷³ The last is thought to celebrate the unmasking of the plot by Sejanus against Tiberius.⁷⁴ Gaius Julius Spartiaticus was “*flamen* of the Deified Julius” in the time of Claudius indicating that priesthoods were not only undertaken by Roman freedmen and women but also Roman citizens.⁷⁵ Tiberius Claudius Dinippus was priest of the Britannic Victory in Corinth following the Roman conquest of Britain in 44 CE.⁷⁶

There were numerous monuments erected to emperors as gods reading “[sacred] to the deified Julius Caesar,” “[sacred] to the deified Augustus,” “sacred to [the deified] Augustus. Gnaeus [Corneliu]s Speratus, Augustalis dedicated this monument,” and “[Sacred to the deified] Augustus. “[This building is dedicated] to the deified Augusta, the grandmother of [Tiberius] Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus.”⁷⁷ It refers to the official deification of Livia by her grandson, the emperor Claudius in 42 CE.⁷⁸

There was a larger than life statue of Augustus now located in the museum in Ancient Corinth with the *toga* drawn over his head, in a pose called *capite velato*. He is portrayed offering up a sacrifice, one of twenty such statues that have survived in different cities in the empire. He is portrayed in the “the manner of a Roman magistrate” making a sacrifice as *pontifex maximus*, incorporating in his person the headship of the civil and cultic activities of the empire.⁷⁹ The sacrifice of emperors would be to the gods on behalf of the empire.

In light of the above discussion, it is concluded that on imperial cult days imperial cult priests “directed everyone to wear crowns and to sacrifice,” and they were to “observe this day annually with sacrifices and wearing of crowns” and we learn that on the accession of the emperor Gaius “each one of you personally offered up a sacrifice.” It is also clear

⁷³ A.B. West, *Latin Inscriptions* 1896–1926 (Corinth: Results of excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies of Athens, Vol. 8, Part 2; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), nos. 110 and p. 15.

⁷⁴ West, *Latin Inscriptions*, 14.

⁷⁵ West, *Latin Inscriptions*, nos. 68, 100.

⁷⁶ Kent, *Inscriptions 1926–1950*, nos. 158–63.

⁷⁷ Kent, *Inscriptions 1926–1950*, nos. 86, 50–55.

⁷⁸ Suetonius, *The Divine Claudius*, 11. 2.

⁷⁹ For a list of these extant statues of Augustus see D.W.J. Gill, “The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 41.2 (1990) 246–7.

from the inscription to Scipio that there were others days throughout the year when there were cultic celebrations. This would have been true for Claudius when he became emperor in 42 CE. The Christian community in Corinth was founded c. 51 CE. All the extant evidence of imperial cultic activities assembled in this chapter indicates how intrusive the cult was in the life of Corinth and, in Paul's time there, how involved its inhabitants were in them.

CORINTH'S FIRST CONVERTS AND CULTIC EXEMPTION

Individual Jews in the Diaspora were exempt from imperial cultic participation. Would this pose no problems for those Jews in Corinth who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah? Those who believed did not renounce their ethnic identity, and Christian Jews in Judea were not required to participate in comparable imperial activities.

The reason for this was the daily offering up of a sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem on behalf of the reigning emperor. It was an extremely important arrangement. A compromise had been negotiated by the Jewish authorities in Rome in the face of what Tessa Rajak sees was the "overt participation in emperor worship" by Provincials in the East. "It was but one of many secured, not by any Roman charter comparable to that granted to Roman colonies, but rather by skillful Jewish political pressure and diplomacy on the part of Jewish representatives and especially of some powerful intermediaries, such as certain members and adherents of the Herodian dynasty, whose other services were of manifest value to Rome."⁸⁰

As was his custom, Paul initially devoted himself exclusively to evangelizing in the synagogue, reasoning with the congregation every Sabbath, seeking to persuade both Jews and Greeks present, Acts 18:4–5. The second phase of Paul's ministry was undertaken, much to the ire of the Jews next door to their synagogue, in the house of Titus Justus, whose names implies Roman citizenship as does that of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue who "believed with all his household."⁸¹

⁸⁰ T. Rajak, "A Roman Charter for the Jews": *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002) 302.

⁸¹ For discussion see E.A. Judge, "The Roman Base of Paul's Mission," *Tyndale Bulletin* 65.1 (2005) 112. In the case of Crispus it was not essential for him to have been Jewish to be the head of a synagogue, as has demonstrated from extant evidence in the East by T. Rajak

The attempt to initiate a criminal action by the Corinthian Jews against Paul would fail before Gallio, a competent Roman jurist.⁸² He had become a Roman senator in 37 CE, and was appointed as proconsul of Achaëa, an important province commended by Claudius when he was restoring it to the Senate as the “province that was dear to him [Claudius].”⁸³ After his time in Corinth, Gallio went on to be elected one of the suffect consuls of Rome in 56 CE,⁸⁴ and subsequently became Nero’s “herald.” He was the brother of Seneca the Younger who was the tutor of Nero.

After Paul abandoned the synagogue in Corinth, the Jews “unanimously” (ὁμοθυμαδόν) brought a case to Gallio against Paul. They charged that “contrary to the law this man is deceptively persuading” (παρὰ τὸν νόμον ἀναπείθει⁸⁵ οὗτος) “the men [of Corinth] to worship God” (τοὺς ἀνθρώπους σέβασθαι τὸν θεόν) (Acts 18:13).⁸⁶

Just as Paul was about to make his defence, Gallio gave his legal decision immediately politely telling the Jews he would proceed, but there was no case to answer.⁸⁷ The accused had committed no “felony or political misdemeanour” (ἀδικημά τι ἢ ῥαδιούργημα πονηρόν) (Acts 18:14a). He went on to explain to the court that the “claims” (ζητήματα)⁸⁸ of the accusers were over three issues. They related firstly to περὶ λόγου, a phase

and D. Noy, “*Archisynagogoi*: Office, Title and Social Status in the Graeco-Roman World,” *JRS* 83 (1993) 75–93.

⁸² For his legal and rhetorical training under the watchful eye of his father, Seneca the Elder, see J. Fairweather, “The History of Declamation,” *Seneca the Elder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), ch. 2 with a discussion of his career.

⁸³ Suetonius, *The Divine Claudius*, 42. D.H. Hurley, Suetonius, *Divus Claudius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 231.

⁸⁴ Seneca the Younger, *Dialogues*, 12.7. For the dating of his role as one of the two suffect consuls of Rome see G. Comedeca, “I consoli del 55–56 e un nuovo collega di Seneca nel consolato: Cornelius Dolabella,” *ZPE* 63 (1986) 208–10.

⁸⁵ ἀναπείθω unlike Acts 18:4 where Luke uses πείθω to describe Paul’s reasoning method of seeking to “persuade” people. The term implies he is seductive or deceitfully doing so. For forensic examples see *Magd.* 14 (221 BCE) and *Ryl.* 114 (280 CE).

⁸⁶ For the arguments for the veracity of the summary of forensic summaries in Acts see B.W. Winter, “The Role of the *captatio benevolentia* in the Speeches of Tertullus and Paul in Acts 24,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 42.2 (1991) 505–531 and *idem*, “Official Proceedings and Forensic Speeches in Acts 24–26,” in B.W. Winter and A.D. Clarke (eds.), *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), ch. 11 and B.W. Winter, “Gallio’s Ruling on the Legal Status of Early Christianity (Acts 18:14–15),” *Tyndale Bulletin* 50.2 (1999) 213–24.

⁸⁷ For evidence from Seneca of his brother’s aversion to flattery and polite manner, and an alternative rendering of the sentence “And Gallio cared for none of these things” (Acts 18: 17), see B.W. Winter, “Rehabilitating Gallio and His Judgement in Acts 18:14–15,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 57.2 (2006) 299–305.

⁸⁸ Cf. Porcius Festus’ use of the term “points of dispute” in another case of the Jews vs. Paul, Acts 25:19, cf. *PRyl.* 117.14 (III CE), *SIG* 785.8 (I CE).

consistently rendered in translations and commentaries as “words” but it is in the singular. In 1996, the editors of the *Revised Supplement* of the Liddell, Scott, Jones and Mackenzie, *Greek English Lexicon*, included a new classification of λόγος as “a declaration of legal immunity” supported by legal texts.⁸⁹

There was an immunity that had been granted to the Jews. Because of heightened political activity among societies in the time of Augustus, he initiated legislation that made it illegal for any association to meet more than once a month. It would be a case of *collegium illicitum*. However, in the same legislation the Jews were given immunity from the monthly meeting and were permitted to meet once a week.⁹⁰ Was one of the charges against Paul that the group meeting each Sabbath next to the Corinthian synagogue was a *collegium illicitum* (Acts 18:7) and, therefore, could not qualify for the “declaration of immunity”?⁹¹

Secondly, Gallio refers to “names” (ὀνόματα). “Roman law held a person liable for actions and not for any name they professed.”⁹² This was no different in the case of the Christians who were subsequently to be interrogated by Pliny the Younger in Bithynia. They were not executed just because they bore the name but because they categorically refused to act by offering cult to Trajan’s statue.⁹³

Lastly, Gallio categorically states that the substance of the case against the accused was about “the law, yours” (νόμου τοῦ καθ’ ὑμᾶς), i.e., not Roman criminal law; therefore he ruled that it was a Jewish issues and did not come within his *imperium*. The Romans formally respected the ancient traditions (*mos maiorum*) of different ethnic groups in their empire.⁹⁴

What was the implication for the first Christians in Corinth? Gallio’s ruling must have been a totally unexpected windfall for them, because they were declared *de facto* to be a Jewish gathering, and able to meet

⁸⁹ P.G.W. Glare and A.A. Thompson, *Greek-English Lexicon: Revised Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 198, citing Justinian, *Novellae*, 17.6 and *Edicta* 2 pr. as examples.

⁹⁰ O.F. Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Rome* (London: Duckworth, 1995) 80.

⁹¹ J.K. Hardin has argued in “Decrees and Drachmas at Thessalonica: An Illegal Assembly in Jason’s House (Acts 17.1–10a),” *NTS* 52.1 (2006) 29–49, that this legislation was used against Jason. In Corinth they moved to the house of Titus Justus, with “some Jews and Greeks” who had already believed (Acts 18:4, 7). Later it is Gaius who is now host to Paul and all the church in Corinth (Rom 16:23).

⁹² Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Rome*, 17.

⁹³ M. Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1994) 62.

⁹⁴ Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, 80 on the *mos maiorum*, i.e., living in accordance with ancient traditions.

weekly. It would also mean that they were exempt from the obligation to participate in the many local imperial cultic celebrations in Corinth.

However, an unexpected development would occur after Paul left Corinth in October, 54 CE, with the accession of Nero. A provincial imperial cult would be approved by the Roman Senate and celebrated annually in Corinth—an inscription records the first holder of the prestigious office of High Priest for life.⁹⁵ It involved all the cities in the Achaean League, which some fifty years before saw the expansion of local imperial cultic activities at the instigation of Scipio.

The upgrading of imperial cultic activities from a civic to provincial level gave those who possessed the civic right the privilege of reclining at tables for festive meals in the precincts of the imperial cult temple (1 Cor. 8:10). This would constitute a temptation for those who possessed that right in the Corinthian church, hence the raising of the issue with Paul by letter as to the appropriateness of those Corinthian Christians who wanted to participate (1 Cor. 8:1ff.).⁹⁶ There would also be different responses elsewhere to imperial cultic veneration by Christians in other provinces in the Roman East.⁹⁷

This chapter has sought to construct a profile of imperial cultic observances from official evidence in Achaia that show how intrusive these activities were in the lives of those who lived in Corinth—something ancient historians have carefully documented for other cities in the Roman empire. It has been argued that the enigma expressed by three leading ancient historians, Millar, Price and Mitchell, concerning the early Christians and the regular local cultic celebrations is resolved with respect to those in Corinth, when cognizance is taken of the consequences of the legal ruling of the noted jurist, Gallio. He had summarily dismissed the

⁹⁵ West, *Latin Inscriptions, 1896–1926*, no. 68, recording the offices held by Gaius Julius Spartiacus including that of the first high priest for life of the provincial imperial cult.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of the Spartiacus inscription and this new phase of imperial cultic activities in Corinth see my article “Identifying the Offering, the Cup and the Table of ‘the Demons’ in 1 Cor. 10:20–21,” C. Belezos, S. Despotis and C. Karakolis (eds.), *Saint Paul and Corinth: International Scientific Conference Proceedings, Corinth, 23–25 September, 2007* (Athens: Psychogios, 2009) 847–68.

⁹⁷ For example, for a different response on the part of Christians in Galatia, see B.W. Winter, “The Imperial Cult and the Early Christians in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13 and Galatians 6),” T. Drew-Bear, M. Tashalan and C.M. Thomas (eds.), *Actes du 1^{er} Congrès International sur Antioche de Pisidie* (Lyon: Université Lumière-Lyon, 2002) 67–75 and a fuller discussion by Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult: A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Social Context of Paul’s Letter*, WUNT 2.237 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

charges in the case of the Jews *vs.* Paul. The ruling was that the accused was not guilty of any offence under Roman law, for the activities to which they so objected related to both Jewish customs or law, i.e., their *mos maiorum*. This was a windfall for the Christians in Corinth, for it was the *de facto* exemption from participation in the emperor cult.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Gallio's judgement would not apply to Christians in other Eastern provinces because he could not exercise the *imperium* as a proconsul beyond the province of Achaëa.

PAULINE PARAENESIS IN ROMANS 12 AND GREEK GNOMIC WISDOM*

Dieter Zeller

The problem of paraenesis is one of the unresolved questions of New Testament research. Not only is the definition of the term disputed,¹ but also the derivation of the genre and the origin of the paraenetic material. To start with the problem of definition: Martin Dibelius,² in his groundbreaking work, used a term found in Greek sources, but barely in the New Testament—which in this connection prefers παρακαλεῖν—to designate texts mainly in the NT epistles, beside the Pauline letters, especially James and 1 Peter, where the recently baptized are instructed in the ethical consequences of baptism for everyday life. Not with theological arguments as in Rom 6, but with traditional material which is stored up in the memory of the hearers and can be called up later (cf. 1 Thess 4:1; 6:2, 6, 11). From the point of view of pragmatics, Dibelius underscores the uniform address³ and the general bearing of the admonitions. They have *usuelle*, not *aktuelle Bedeutung* that is, they are not triggered by a specific situation.⁴ Stylistically, unconnected small units (which Dibelius designated *Spruchreihen*) can be distinguished from “treatises” (Dibelius: *Abhandlungen*); these treat a concrete subject in a coherent manner. This concept of paraenesis is more practical than the wide definition given,

* Thanks to my friend Anthony Pateman for improving my English.

¹ Cf. recently James Starr and Troels Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (BZNW 125, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004) 3–4, the results of two Scandinavian conferences. For a history of research, see Johannes Thomas, *Der jüdische Phokylides* (NTOA 23; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992) 245–272.

² M. Dibelius, *Der Brief des Jakobus* (6th ed.; KEK 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984) 15–19; *idem*, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (TB, 58; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1926; reprinted München: Kaiser, 1975), § 24; *idem*, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (6th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966) 239–241.

³ Dibelius, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur*, 140: „einheitliche Adressierung.“ This does not necessarily mean personal address as Thomas, *Der jüdische Phokylides*, 271 seems to understand. See, for example, Rom 13:1–7 where impersonal law-style changes with diatribe-elements and finally with second-person plural imperatives.

⁴ Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, 239. That this distinction is still useful can be seen comparing 1 Cor 12 with Rom 12:3–8. The former text presupposes a Corinthian question; the latter is not conditioned by problems in Rome.

for example, by Wiard Popkes.⁵ For him, paraenesis means any kind of moral advice and permeates the whole New Testament. In contrast to Popkes, Engberg-Pedersen⁶ goes back to Dibelius. Looking for Hellenistic predecessors, Engberg-Pedersen draws a parallel between the Pauline dichotomy of indicative and imperative (“theology” and “ethics”) and the Stoic doctrine of the ultimate good which needs as its complement paraenesis (Latin *praecepta*).⁷ The analogy may hit an essential point, but the hint at philosophical paraenesis cannot be exploited genealogically. NT paraenesis hardly reflects on the same theoretical and technical level as does Stoic philosophy.⁸

It seems more promising to search for stylistic and ideological parallels in more popular literature. This I did in a paper given at a conference of German *Religionswissenschaftler* in 1991, comparing the sayings of the Seven Sages to Pauline paraenesis.⁹ At the time the paper was conceived, there also appeared the dissertation of Walter T. Wilson, *Love without Pretense*.¹⁰ Though he too centers on Rom 12, his horizon of comparison is much broader. He not only adduces “Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature,” but “Gnomic Wisdom” in general in Greece, in OT-Jewish tradition as well as in the literature of the Ancient Near East and Egypt.

In Greek gnomic wisdom literature we can distinguish four main genres:¹¹

⁵ W. Popkes, *Paränese und Neues Testament* (SBS 168; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996); cf. also his contribution: “Paraenesis in the New Testament,” Starr and Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 13–46.

⁶ “The Concept of Paraenesis,” Starr and Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 47–72.

⁷ *Ibid.* 65–66. Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 94; 95.1, 12. In *Ep.* 94.1, however, it becomes evident, that the Stoic *praecepta* are classified corresponding to the different roles a male has to play in society.

⁸ Cf. Anders Klostergaard Petersen, “Paraenesis in Pauline Scholarship and in Paul—An Intricate Relationship,” Starr and Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 267–295, esp. 270.

⁹ The paper appeared under the heading “Die Worte der Sieben Weisen und die neutestamentliche Paränese,” in Horst Bürkle (ed.), *Grundwerte menschlichen Verhaltens in den Religionen* (Religionswissenschaft 6; Frankfurt am Main etc.: Lang, 1993) 89–100. This essay underlies the following discussion.

¹⁰ Subtitle: *Romans 12.9–21 and Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature* (WUNT II 46; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991).

¹¹ See Dieter Zeller, “Eine weisheitliche Grundschrift in der Logienquelle?” Frans van Segbroeck et al. (eds.), *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (BETL 100; Leuven: University Press and Peeters, 1992) 1.389–401, esp. 394–397. Wilson, *Love without Pretense*, 51–87, *idem*, *The Mysteries of Righteousness* (TSAJ 40; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994) 15–41 has a similar grouping, but he draws more parallels to the wisdom of the Ancient Near East, and in the case of “chreia-collections” gives more weight to external form than to provenance.

1. Gnostic poetry in various meters. In the NT, however, we are dealing with prose texts. Therefore, more relevant for our enterprise are
2. Collections of prose utterances of sages of ancient days such as the Seven Sages.
3. Compilations of fragments from philosophers, in part in the form of *chreiai* (situation—response). These we can ignore since, as it was just said, NT paraenesis seldom reaches the level and the originality of philosophical reflection. Its material is more traditional. We will, however, pay some attention to
4. Instructions given by the educator to young people, because some examples, especially from Isocrates, played a role in the history of research into NT paraenesis. Characteristic of instructions are the initial call to attention and the address “my son.”¹²

Because, in the meantime, I returned to work on the sayings of the Seven Sages together with a classical philologist,¹³ I will concentrate on these representatives of gnostic wisdom and compare them in form and content with Romans 12. My aim is not to show that Paul is in any way dependent on Greek models, but by comparison—which presupposes a certain affinity—I intend to highlight the “small nuances”¹⁴ that render the Pauline texts significant—not only different—in the Greek ambience. As reference text, I again choose Romans 12–13, two chapters which, since Dibelius, are considered as exemplary for “paraenesis,” and more specifically for *usuelle Paränese*. The detachment from a concrete situation is clearest in Rom 12:9–21, especially in generalities like v. 9bc (“detesting the evil, holding on to the good”). There, the Apostle is addressing the whole community—for that reason the second person plural prevails. An

¹² Cf. *Vita Aesopi*, nr. 109, in: B.E. Perry (ed.), *Aesopica* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), I.69–70 (version G) respectively I.101–2 (version W) and numerous examples from Egypt and the Ancient Near East. In Isocrates, *ad Nicoclem*—a kind of *Regentenspiegel*—and Ps.-Isocrates, *ad Demonicum* this is replaced by a larger prooemium.

¹³ Jochen Althoff and Dieter Zeller (eds.), *Die Worte der Sieben Weisen* (TzF 89; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006). The following is a key to the sigla and the enumeration applied in this book: A = Papyrus of Athens nr. 2782; D = Demetrius of Phaleron in Stobaeus 3.1.172; M = Stone of Miletupolis in Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 3d. ed., Nr. 1268; Ox. = Papyrus Oxyrhynchos nr. 61.4099; S = Sosiades in Stobaeus III.1.173. The redactions in late antiquity are reconstructed by Maria Tziatzi-Papagianni, *Die Sprüche der sieben Weisen. Zwei byzantinische Sammlungen* (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 51; Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1994).

¹⁴ Johannes Weiss in the preface to his commentary *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEK 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910) iii, says that a sense of *die religionsgeschichtliche Nuance* should characterize his work.

exception is 12:21 where the singular, typical for the admonition in Proverbs as quoted in v. 20, is retained (“If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on his head”). The quotation—like the preceding one in v. 19—is taken from a Greek version of the OT.¹⁵ Moreover, Proverbs in its LXX shape seems to be used also in vv. 16d, 17b. So there is a sapiential flavour in vv. 9–21, though an OT-Jewish one. Beside these Jewish traditions, there are also specifically Christian presuppositions and motivations. This becomes evident especially in the frame of the two chapters: according to 12:1–2 an estrangement from “this world” has taken place; the thinking of the believer has to be renewed. And according to 13:11–14, the end of this world has drawn near, it is time to align one’s life with Jesus Christ. This does not sound like Greek wisdom. Nevertheless, once the theological-christological-eschatological frame is removed, it may become possible to detect some similarities with the corpus of practical wisdom collected in the gnomology of the Seven Sages.

COMPARISON OF FORMS

First, I should present the sayings of the Seven Sages in their principal variants developed during the Hellenistic period. They are attributed to famous elder statesmen from Greece and Asia Minor, living in the seventh to sixth centuries BCE, among them the learned Thales from Miletus, the Athenian lawgiver and poet Solon, the Lacedaemonian Chilon, who is said to be responsible for the spartan terseness of the sayings. The Seven appear for the first time as a collegium in Plato’s *Protagoras* 343AB, written presumably in the eighties of the fourth cent. BCE. There, they are said to have dedicated to the Delphic Apollo, as the first-fruits of their wisdom, the well known inscriptions at the temple “Know yourself” and “Nothing too much” (“Everything in moderation”). This is the origin of a first type (A) of Sayings: A series of short imperatives following the model “Know yourself” is transmitted as written on a Delphic stone by the Seven collectively. This type is attested in antiquity on a number of papyri and inscriptions spread over the Hellenistic world, as far as the river Oxus in modern Afghanistan. It probably was used in the education of young men. Sosiades, preserved in the Byzantine collection of Stobaeus, recounts 143

¹⁵ In Rom 12:19, MT and LXX are combined; the parallel in Heb 10:30 suggests a common tradition. V. 20 is identical with LXX, but has the verb ψωμίζειν instead of τρέφειν.

of these short recommendations. To give an example, I quote the first four of several counsels of the Seven Sages in this version:

Follow God.
Obey the law.
Worship the gods.
Respect your parents.

A second type (B) is constituted by the attribution of a single famous saying to each one of the Seven, e.g. Bias, "Most people are bad." Such short single maxims are found on statues or depictions of the Seven. They are attested as well in Diogenes Laertius and in poetic or prose mnemonic lists. They also form the headline of a larger corpus of sayings, ascribed to each of the Sages by Aristotle's pupil, Demetrius of Phaleron.¹⁶ Since in Diogenes Laertius, however, this corpus has been separate from the single pronouncements, each type of saying may have its own origin and history of tradition.

Thus, in Demetrius we have a third type (C): agglomerations of sayings of different grammatical structure, not only imperatives, but also statements, with a motivating phrase found occasionally under the name of each of the Seven Sages. All three types have in common that they contain advice for a good and successful life, but the material is not organized in topics and the units are disconnected. Type A assimilates the units externally by an identical grammatical construction, type C, only by attributing them to the same authority. This is normal with collections of gnomic wisdom.

If we now compare these arrangements with our example of NT paraenesis,¹⁷ we observe that in Rom 12–13, the units, albeit only loosely connected, are more extended. Sometimes, as in 12:3–8 and 13:1–7, they even form little treatises on a certain subject. In this regard, 12:9–21 could also be considered as a thematic unit on love¹⁸ within the community and outside, though v. 9bc is more general, and vv. 11–12 do not concern relationships with other people directly. But, what is most striking is the paratactic style, the serial structure. Rom 12:9–19b consists of a series of asyndetic short phrases in a volitive mode. However, the grammatical construction

¹⁶ Preserved also by Stobaeus 3.1.172.

¹⁷ Wilson, *Love without Pretense*, chapter 3, endeavours to show a macrostructural conformity of Rom 12 with various Hellenistic-Jewish texts.

¹⁸ Wilson, *Love without Pretense*, 142–43 attempts to demonstrate that v. 9a, "Love must be completely sincere" is a "thematic statement."

differs: in v. 9a an ἔστω must be supplied,¹⁹ vv. 9b–13 participles vary with adjectives in the plural, vv. 14–19b imperatives in the second person plural (vv. 14, 16d) are interwoven with infinitives (v. 15) and plural participles (vv. 16ab, 17–19a). So, we lack the uniformity of the A-type. Moreover, in vv. 19–20 a proof from the OT is added. But the style of the whole section is not stamped by the OT²⁰ nor by rabbinic rules.²¹ Usually one looks to the Greek tradition for predecessors of the NT form of paraenesis, especially instructions like Ps-Isocrates, *ad Demonicum* are adduced. There, a prooemium (1–12) introduces a topical treatment of the main obligations of the young addressee (13–43). The loose chain of more or less circumstantial imperatives at one point (16) turns into a staccato of short imperative phrases:

Fear the gods.
Honour parents.
Respect friends.
Obey the laws.

These are exactly the requirements enumerated at the opening of traditional wisdom collections like that of Sosiades (nos. 2–4) or the Athenian papyrus 2782 (nos. 6–8), only respect for friends is missing.²² Thus, for the shortening of admonitions within a fuller paraenesis, the Delphic maxims type A are exemplary. In Sosiades, we even have pairs of these short members, as in Rom 12:9bc, 15. There, vv. 16bc, 19ab and 21 form antithetical pairs.²³ In the Pauline letters, the enumerative style of paraenesis can still be found in 1 Thess 4:3b–6a (four infinitives)²⁴ and in the catalogue

¹⁹ Therefore, the phrase cannot be compared with the indicative sayings in D, consisting of a noun plus an adjective (against Wilson, *Love without Pretense*, 151).

²⁰ The OT sapiential *Mahnspruch*, of which v. 20 offers a mutilated example, is characterized by the poetic parallelism of the imperative as well as of the reasoned elements. Christian paraenesis is as prosaic as the Sayings of the Seven are—notwithstanding later versification.

²¹ Against the attempts to postulate a Semitic original, see Dieter Zeller, *Der Brief an die Römer* (RNT, Regensburg: Pustet, 1985) 206 and Wilson, *Love without Pretense*, 156–162.

²² Cf. as well Chares 5–9; Pythagoras, *Carmen aureum* 1–8; Ps-Phokylides 8; Plutarch, *lib. educ.* 7E. For further parallels cf. Dieter Zeller, “Die Worte der Sieben Weisen—ein Zeugnis volkstümlicher griechischer Ethik,” Althoff and Zeller, *Worte*, 105–158, esp. 135, n. 130.

²³ Cf. Jochen Althoff and Dieter Zeller, “Antike Textzeugnisse und Überlieferungsgeschichte,” Althoff and Zeller, *Worte*, 5–81, esp. 26 (D I 7f), 62; the antithesis of a negative and a positive member with ἀλλά, however is not found.

²⁴ Infinitives also in the Sayings of Cleobulus (D I, dependent on δεῖν nr. 2?) as in the rendering of these clusters in Diogenes Laertius 1.37, 69–70, 78, 87, 90–91; similar in form are the Pythagorean rules in Diogenes Laertius 8.22–24. Here the infinitives are

of vices and virtues Gal 5:19–23.²⁵ While in the corpus of the letters the admonitions often are interrupted by motivations and proofs, series of imperatives in the second person plural occur in the final paraenesis: 1 Cor 16:13–14;²⁶ 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:4–6.²⁷

In the plural construction we have already noticed an important difference between NT paraenesis and Greek sapiential admonition: NT paraenesis is directed to the whole community,²⁸ not just to the (male) individual alone. Another point is that while gnomic wisdom often understands itself as “counseling,” paraenesis in the Oslo-definition²⁹ does not anticipate disagreement. Its special authority is expressed in the introductory formula “I urge you, brothers, by God’s mercy” (Rom 12:1) or “In virtue of the grace given to me I say to every one of you” (Rom 12:3) or “We beg and urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus” (1 Thess 4:1). This, however, does not have the obligatory force of a law. Though there may be some similarities in style, especially the series of short volitive clauses, NT paraenesis differs from gnomic wisdom in pragmatics. Paraenesis as a genre remains unprecedented in Greek literature. Therefore, though somewhat frustrated, we now turn from questions of form to questions of content.

SOPHROSYNE AS A COMMON ETHICAL IDEAL

According to Wilson, “The gnomic anthologies embodied fundamental social norms and ethical attitudes.”³⁰ They served as copy-books or primers for instruction in reading and writing. Thus, they often became the basis

subordinated to a verb of speech. For imperatival infinitives in Greek literature cf., however, Wilson, *Love without Pretense*, 177–78.

²⁵ For an example in the Sayings of the Seven Sages cf. Althoff and Zeller, “Antike Textzeugnisse und Überlieferungsgeschichte,” 41 (D V 13).

²⁶ Cf. also 1 Cor 15:58 as the closing of chap. 15.

²⁷ Cf. Pet 2:17. Serial elements can be found in Phil 4:8 (8 objects of λογίζεσθε); Col 3:12, 14 (6 virtues as the objects of ἐνδύσασθε).

²⁸ Only the *Haustafeln* differentiate between groups in the community, but they still are formulated in the second person plural. At best, one can compare them with the speeches Pythagoras gives for young people, to the leaders, the boys and to the women of Croton (Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* 37–57).

²⁹ Cf. Starr and Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 4. In the (late) definitions of Ps-Libanius and Ammonius (cf. Popkes, *Paranäse und Neues Testament*, 45F), paraenesis admits no opposition because of the general evidence of its content.

³⁰ Wilson, *The Mysteries of Righteousness*, 32.

of moral education in the ancient world. As I tried to show, the Sayings of the Seven Sages, for example, can be seen as testimonies of “popular morality.”³¹ One of these commonly accepted values, one of the cardinal virtues in antiquity was σωφροσύνη.³² The term originally means “healthy thinking.” Though it is mentioned in our sayings only once (in a list of virtues, D V 13), the attitude indicated by the term is basic for the ethos of the addressees. In archaic times, when the collection was started they were intended for young aristocrats or sons of free rich men.³³ Looking out on a life with thousands of possibilities, they had to be warned against ὑβρις, i.e., overestimating their abilities, a danger always looming in sudden success or abundance. The Delphic maxim “Know yourself,” ascribed also to Chilon (D III 1) and Thales (Diogenes Laertius 1.40), reminded them of their mortality. Following Plato, *Charmides* 164DE “Know yourself” is the enigmatic version of σωφρόνει. The young nobles were brought up not to exaggerate (μηδὲν ἄγαν, D II 1, known also as the second Delphic maxim) and to observe the measure (μέτρον ἄριστον, D I 1; μέτρω χρῶ D IV 18), especially in relation to the vital instincts, but also in eating and drinking, as well as with regard to the emotions and passions.³⁴ All this can be subsumed under σωφροσύνη which then has the nuance of “self-restraint.” As one of the four cardinal virtues, it is opposed to licentiousness. In Plato, *Republic* 442C, it is defined as the reason’s dominion over the lower parts of the soul.

In the NT, the term is used in this specific sense in late writings, such as the Pastorals.³⁵ In our example, Rom 12:3ff, however, σωφρονεῖν is opposed

³¹ “Die Worte der Sieben Weisen,” 107ff and *passim*. For the first two centuries CE, cf. now Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge: University Press, 2007). Among other sources, she exploits collections of proverbs and idioms, especially Ps.-Diogenianus and Zenobius.

³² Following the grammarian Ammonius, *De adfinium vocabulorum differentia* (ed. K. Nickau; Leipzig: Teubner 1966) 119: σωφρονεῖν is a generally acknowledged good. For a history of the concept see Helen North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 35; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); Vincent L. Wimbush, “Sophrosyne: Greco-Roman Origins of a Type of Ascetic Behavior,” *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World: In Honor of James M. Robinson*, ed. James E. Goehring et al. (Forum 2; Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1990) 89–191; Adriaan Rademaker, *Sophrosyne and the Rhetoric of Self Restraint: Polysemy and Persuasive Use of an Ancient Greek Value term* (Mnemosyne, Suppl. 259; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005). For the NT use cf. Dieter Zeller, “Σωφροσύνη, κτλ.,” *EWNT* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1983) 3:790–792.

³³ Cf. the essay of Markus Asper, “Literatursoziologisches zu den Sprüchen der Sieben Weisen,” Althoff and Zeller, *Worte*, 87–103, esp. 87–89.

³⁴ For details cf. Zeller, “Die Worte der Sieben Weisen,” 119–124, esp. 126–27.

³⁵ Cf. Abraham J. Malherbe, “The Virtue Femininarum in 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” *Renewing Tradition: Studies in Texts and Contexts in Honor of James W. Thompson*, ed. Mark W. Hamilton, T.H. Olbricht and Jeffrey Peterson (Princeton Theological Monograph Series; Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2007) 45–65.

to wantonness (ὑπερφρονεῖν), in a wordplay that cannot be translated adequately into English: “Do not think of yourselves more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking . . .” (ABS). The problem is not the abundance of wealth, but the abundance of the effects of the Spirit in the community. Σωφρονεῖν is thought to be the principle for a peaceful coexistence of the charismatics endowed with different gifts. The verb here has a special meaning. It is not only “sober judgement,”³⁶ but self-limitation, (self-)discretion, in contrast to meddling in the affairs of other people. This corresponds with the definition of σωφροσύνη that Charmides, in Plato’s homonymous dialogue 161B, has heard from someone (Kritias): τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν (cf. 1 Thess 4:11 τὰ ἴδια).³⁷ The opposite would be “to do other people’s things” which is detestable, following Chilon (D III 9). In Plato’s dialogue, Charmides doing his own thing is made possible by self-knowledge. Every one knows about his abilities and his limits (*Charm.* 171DE, 172A). In Rom 12, such restrictions to one’s personal endowment is conditioned by “the measure of faith” one received. This is explained in v. 6a by the individual donation of grace. In my view, the expression κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως in v. 6b is equivalent; it does not signify a norm, but the initial distribution of grace when the individual came to faith. It is not human finitude as such that prohibits haughtiness or boasting, but the fact that each believer has received a personal gift (cf. 1 Cor 4:7). It is received as grace and cannot be compared with the charisms of others. It is against this background that the single admonition in v. 16, formulated again with φρονεῖν, has to be placed. “Do not have haughty thoughts, but get carried away with the lowly (things).”³⁸ ABS makes it plain: “accept humble duties.” In insisting on τὰ ταπεινὰ φρονεῖν, Paul leaves the Greek value-system behind. Greek gnomic wisdom, but also the ethics of Aristotle, tend to the golden mean.³⁹ Therefore ταπεινοφροσύνη (humbleness, humility) in Greek pagan texts is seldom regarded positively.⁴⁰ To the Greek sense of measure, it is repugnant to “esteem the other superior to oneself” (Phil 2:3, cf. Rom 12:10b: “in honouring the other going first”). Therefore, such

³⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 645.

³⁷ Herodotus 1.8.4 has τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκοπεῖν. Cf. the slogan in an advertisement of a German Baumarkt: “Mach dein Ding.”

³⁸ This is probably a neuter, not a masculine. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 656, prefers “associate with the lowly people,” but does not render the passive nuance συναπάγεσθαι.

³⁹ For Aristotle, cf. North, *Sophrosyne*, 201.

⁴⁰ Cf. K. Wengst, *Demut—Solidarität der Gedeimütigten* (München: Kaiser, 1987) 32ff. and Epictetus, *Diss.* 3.24.1: “you are not born to share the humiliation of others (συνταπεινούσθαι).”

an attitude is modeled after the example of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5–8). In v. 16d Paul adds “do not think of yourself as wise,” transforming a counsel of Prov 3:7 into the plural. The idea, however, is not specific to OT wisdom. In his prooemium to the laws, the famous lawgiver Charondas writes: “Each citizen should pretend to be reasonable (σωφρονεῖν) rather than wise (φρονεῖν).”⁴¹ Thus, Paul and his Greek ambience certainly share the ideal of σωφροσύνη, but when it comes to ταπεινοφροσύνη, the Christian ethos favours an extreme which the wise Greek tries to avoid. This tendency can be verified also in another field of moral engagement: in the behaviour towards other people.

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ONE’S FELLOW, ESPECIALLY TOWARDS AN ADVERSARY

When we confront Rom 12:17–21 with the utterances of the Sages concerning the attitudes to other people, we should distinguish behaviour towards friends from behaviour towards adversaries. But a number of sayings seem to presuppose the neutrality of the fellow-man. Typical for the Greek emphasis on the mean is Bias’ rule of thumb (D VI 5): “Be neither good-hearted, nor bad-hearted/malicious.” A considerable proportion of the sayings would prevent us from doing any harm by word or deed to our fellow, for example, M II 15: “Do not despise anybody,” and Chilon D III 4: “Do not revile your neighbour. Otherwise, you will hear things which you will regret.” The directive for my own behaviour is what I expect the others should do for me. That is summarized in the Golden Rule, if only in the negative formulation (D V 4: “What you are displeased with in your neighbour, do not do yourself”). But numerous short pieces of advice transcend the neutral “neither . . . nor” of Bias. They require one positively to please to everybody, to be benevolent and friendly with anyone, to avoid strife and enmity.⁴² Why? The short imperatives of type A do not betray anything with regard to motive. In the longer instructions the motivation sometimes flashes up. Pseudo-Isocrates, *ad Demonium* 20 says: “Behave kindly to everybody, but make use only of the best people. In this way you will not be an enemy to

⁴¹ Cf. Holger Thesleff (ed.), *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period* (AAAbO.H. 30.1, Abo: Academy, 1965) 61,11ff, cf. already l.6 where σωφρονεῖν is contrasted with a lack of shame. Cf. also Ps.-Diogenianus 5.46; there, ὑπὲρ τὸ δέον φρονεῖν is typical for the swaggerer (ἀλαζών).

⁴² For examples see Zeller, “Worte,” 141.

the first one, but you will become a friend of the second one.” Thus, the second category of people we have to reckon with are (potential) friends. In ancient Greece, the social rank of a person depended on his having as many friends as possible. Therefore, several sayings of the Seven are centered on friendship. They prize its value and give advice on what kind of people are qualified for friendship and how to obtain and preserve it. Here, not only benevolence (M I 15), but also effective help (M I 1⁴³, 21), especially in times of need and distress (D III 5; VII 12) is asked for. It is typical of this ethic of friendship that a friend should consider the good or ill fortune of his companion as his own, συγχαίρειν or συμπάσχειν, as Rom 12:15 calls for “rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep,” too.⁴⁴ Among friends, one even can put up with being slightly reviled (D V 7). It is not advisable to react with violence to every injury. One at least should try brotherly correction. But do not overreact! D VII 15: “So rail at the other that you can become friends again quickly.”⁴⁵

But if you have to do with adversaries, the case is different. In Greek society the position of the individual, his ἀρετή, is determined by his capacity to recruit many friends, but also to resist his enemies.⁴⁶ Enemies and friends cannot be treated equally. Already in speaking of the other, there is a difference: “Do not say bad things of your friend and good things of your adversary; this would be illogical” (D V 8). In the type-A-sayings on “be benevolent towards the friends,” there immediately follows “struggle against the enemies” (M I 15–16, S 28–29). Menander, *Monostichoi* 448: λυποῦντα λύπει καὶ φιλοῦνθ’ ὑπερφίλει. Elsewhere, violence should be avoided: “Do nothing with violence” (D I 11). “Take with persuasion, not with violence” (D VI 14). “Do not stick to violence” (S 89). But when an enemy inflicts an injury upon you (ὑβρίς), you have to ward it off with force (S 83). In the later tradition such a violent reaction is opposed to shaming, a method appropriate against members of the same household.⁴⁷ To be sure, one should not begin by doing harm (S 130), but there is a difference

⁴³ “Assist friends” is one of the chief injunctions placed in the beginning. Cf. also Ox. 16 = S 15.

⁴⁴ For parallels cf. Zeller, “Worte,” 144; *idem*, *Römer*, 210–11. Add Ps-Socrates, *Ep.* 9.2.

⁴⁵ For more texts cf. Zeller, “Worte,” 148–49.

⁴⁶ Cf. Zeller, “Worte,” 146, and especially Mary Whitlock Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies. A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1989).

⁴⁷ Cf. Zeller, “Worte,” 147. Solon in the Codex Parisinus Gr. 1630, ed. J.F. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca e codicibus regis* (reprint of 1833 edition; Hildesheim: Olms, 1962) 1.136: Ἵσχύι χρῶ πρός πολέμιους, πρός δὲ οἰκείους αἰσχύνῃ.

between offense (ἀνδικεῖσθαι) and injury (ὕβριζεσθαι). One can tolerate the wrongdoing of a friend, but not an insolent attack on the order of the right. In this way I would interpret an injunction of Chilon (D III 20 ἀδικούμενος διαλλάσσου, ὕβριζόμενος τιμωροῦ). The transpersonal aspect, that the common order is jeopardized, however, may play a role with philosophers such as Democritus. In the sayings of the Seven Sages, it seems to be more a question of honor: A man unable to withstand his adversaries will be despised not only by them,⁴⁸ but also by his fellow citizens.

But here again the principle of moderation comes in: "Do not preserve immortal enmity, remember that you are mortal."⁴⁹ People can change. There is a proverb: "Even friends once have become enemies."⁵⁰ The opposite can also happen. In a solitary saying (Diogenes Laertius 1.91), Cleobulus, one of the Seven Sages, is reported to have said: "One has to do good to a friend, in order that he may become still more of a friend, but one should turn an enemy into a friend, because we have to beware the criticisms of friends, but the insidiousness of enemies." In contrast to the German motto "The more enemies, the more honor," for the sages to have enemies is not the ideal. They recommend caution in loving, but also in hating: "to love as one who shortly will hate, to hate as one who shortly will love."⁵¹ The μηδὲν ἄγαν motto concerns the obstinate perseverance in hating⁵² as well as loving engagement. Therefore the admonitions of the Seven Sages not only call for avoiding enmities and strife (see note 42 above), but also for resolving actual enmities (D I 14; M II 22; S 112). So you should prevent an overreaction which you could regret (Pittacus in Diogenes Laertius 1.76: "pardon is better than regret"). And if you are lucky, you will win another friend.⁵³ Friends, however, are won by benefactions. That one should repay good for evil in order to overcome enmity, is a paradoxical counsel I have found only in the late *Vita Aesopi*, version G, 110: "If you are fortunate, do not carry the evil after the enemies, but do good to them, in order that they may regret, seeing to whom they did wrong." It is evident

⁴⁸ So explicitly the instruction in *Vita Aesopi* W, nr. 109 (in Perry, *Aesopica*): "Be terrible to your enemies in order not to get despised by them."

⁴⁹ Menander, *Monostichoi* 5, anonymously quoted by Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 2. 21; 1394b 22.

⁵⁰ Reinhold Strömberg, *Griechische Sprichwörter: Eine neue Sammlung* (Göteborg: Akademiförlaget Gumpert, 1961) 15.

⁵¹ Bias following Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 2.13, 1389b 23, the first part in Diogenes Laertius 1.87.

⁵² Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 2.21; 1389b 5. The applicability of this maxim to hate is presupposed when by negation a special rhetorical effect can be reached: Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 2.21; 1395a 33–34.

⁵³ Thus Publilius Syrus (1st cent. BC) 142: *Cum inimico ignoscis, amicos gratis complures acquiris*.

that only the fortunate one can risk such magnanimity, and the ultimate purpose of his generosity is to elicit the admiration of his enemies.

This brings us to Rom 12 and some “nuances.” First, we can observe that some admonitions concern the inner circle of “brothers” (explicitly so v. 10 “brotherly love”), of the “saints” (v. 13a). This is the situational framework for the love requested in the programmatic v. 9a. The metaphor of a sibling in the Christian community takes the place friendship had in the classical ethos. But in v. 14 (persecutors) and explicitly in vv. 17–18, “all human beings,” this frame is enlarged. A positive reaction is required towards the persecutors, too, towards those who inflict evil on you, even if they are outsiders. Though with a double restriction (“if possible,” “as far as it is your part”), the injunction to keep peace with everybody extends to “all human beings.” For non-retaliation (v. 17a), we have some hesitating advice in popular wisdom, though one should take revenge in case of ὕβρις. For the rigorous principle that one should avoid wrongdoing under any circumstances, even when suffering wrongdoing from others, we have to search the philosophers, for example, Plato’s *Crito* 49. In Rom 12:17–19, the reason given for this unusual behaviour is theological: judgement is reserved to God, as a quotation from Deuteronomy makes clear. This motivation is lacking in the sayings of the Seven Sages. But cf. the gnostic excerpts of Menander, *Monostichoi* 4.12: “Respect the (divine) vengeance (Νέμεσις) and do not overstrain yourself.” It would be presumptuous to assume the divine role of judge. This is quite in the vein of Delphic wisdom which reminds men that they are not gods. Pythagoras is credited with the saying: “it is much better, to suffer injury than to kill a man, because the judgment lies with Hades.”⁵⁴

Now, Paul, with biblical material, not only urges the Romans to give room to the divine anger, but quoting from Prov 25:21–22, he positively admonishes them to help the enemy in his needs (v. 20). The sense of the motivation “Thus doing you will heap burning coals on his head” is debated already in its OT context. Does it mean that benefactions aggravate the guilt of an evildoer when he reaches judgment or is this an image of shame and conversion? Rom 12 12:19 seems to favour the first interpretation. Rom 12:21, however, not only points to the final, eschatological victory over the evil,⁵⁵ but to the actual overcoming of the enemies evil

⁵⁴ Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorica* 155 = 179.

⁵⁵ Thus my earlier interpretation in Zeller, *Römer*, 212.

attitude⁵⁶ by doing good.⁵⁷ This corresponds to the Jewish understanding of Prov 25:21–22.⁵⁸ It changes the meaning of the second motivational clause, omitted by Paul, “and God will requite you” to “and God will create peace for you” or “and God will deliver (the enemy) to you,” that is: He will make him your friend. However, this also corresponds to the purpose Greeks give to good deeds done to an enemy: By benefactions you should overcome his roughness.⁵⁹ In the Greek ambience, the paradoxical admonition to love your enemies, to do good to those who do you harm (Q Luke 6:27) is rationalized with the promise that the adversary will thus change his mind. By doing so you will finally have one more friend. This rationale is missing in the synoptic logia about loving one’s enemies. It seems that in this concluding v. 21 Paul adapted OT wisdom, which is continued in Jesus’ sapiential admonitions, to Greek thought and feeling.

⁵⁶ This reference, however, is not certain, because “the good” and “the evil” are general concepts as in v. 9.

⁵⁷ In a later essay “Konkrete Ethik im hellenistischen Kontext” (2001), reprinted in Dieter Zeller, *Neues Testament und hellenistische Umwelt* (BBB 150, Hamburg: Philo, 2006) 215–248, esp. 223, I inclined to this solution.

⁵⁸ Cf. (Hermann L. Strack and) Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (München: Beck, 1965) 3.302. Cf. *Test. Benjamin* 4:3: The “good man,” by doing good, overcomes the evil, the sinners are planning against him, protected by God. Cf. the promises in 5:1–4 as well.

⁵⁹ Hierocles on “brotherly love” in Stobaeus 4. 27.20 (Hense p. 661, 20–21). Cf. the *Vita Aesopi*, nr. 110 (in Perry, *Aesopica*), quoted above and parallels in Zeller, *Ethik*, 223, n. 48.

MOST BEAUTIFUL AND DIVINE:
GRAECO-ROMANS (ESPECIALLY PLUTARCH), AND PAUL, ON LOVE
AND MARRIAGE

Frederick E. Brenk

ἄνερ, ἀτὰρ σύ μοι ἔσσι καθηγητής καὶ φιλόσοφος καὶ διδάσκαλος τῶν καλλίστων
καὶ θειοτάτων.

My dear husband “but thou art to me” guide, philosopher and teacher of
what is most beautiful and divine. (Plutarch, *Advice to a Bride and Groom*
145C)¹

τί γὰρ οἶδας, γύναι, εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σώσεις; ἢ τί οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σώσεις;

For all you know, wife, you might save your husband; or for all you know,
husband, you might save your wife (I Cor 7:16).²

Most scholars and students are familiar with Plato’s *Phaidros* (*Phaedrus*) and *Symposion* (*Symposium*) as great philosophical works treating *eros* (erotic desire or love) in a very positive way.³ Others, a smaller number, might have heard of or read Plutarch’s *Dialogue on Love* (*Erotikos* or *Amatorius*), which is written in the same vein. Another quite different type of literature went by the title “*On Love*” (*Peri Eros*), or more rarely, “*Erotikos*” or “*Erotikos Logos*” (“*A Discourse on Love*”).⁴ This type of

¹ Adapted from *Iliad* 6.429. Thanks are due to Professor Gretchen Reydam-Schils of the University of Notre Dame for generously going over this article and making several suggestions and to Geert Roskam of the Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, for also making some suggestions.

² Literally: “What do you know, wife, if you will save your husband? Or what do you know, husband, if you will save your wife?” The translation above, quite different from *The Revised English Bible*, is taken from J.A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Yale Bible; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008) 303. See his long discussion of the idiomatic Greek and parallels in the LXX.

³ References to Pythagorean, Stoic, Cynic, and other sources can be found in W. Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy. The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (1st ed., 1994; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004).

⁴ See R. Scannapieco “Polemiche antiepicuree nell’*Amatorius* di Plutarco e nell’*Euoboico* di Dione di Prusa,” in A. Caramico, *et al.*, *Aspetti del mondo classico. Lettura ed interpretazione dei testi* (Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze dell’Antichità 31; Salerno: Università degli Studi di Salerno, 2006) 81–126 (82, note 6), on similar *Περὶ Γάμου* literature; M.B. Crawford, “*Amatorius*: Plutarch’s Departure from the *περὶ γάμου* Literature,” in *Plutarch, Platón, y Aristóteles* (ed. A. Pérez Jimenez, J. García López, and R.M. Aguilar (Madrid: Ed. Clásicas, 1999) 288–298; H. Görgemanns, “Einführung,” in *Plutarch. Dialog über die Liebe*

literature, which treated love in a physiological—phenomenological vein, characteristically was not in dialogue form, is mostly unknown to us, and remains largely unstudied by modern scholars. Writing such a treatise, however, seems to have been almost *de rigueur* for ancient philosophers.

For the present purpose three writings of Plutarch will be used as a framework for understanding the Graeco-Roman background of Paul's attitude toward love and marriage: fragments from Plutarch's work *On Love*, his *Advice to a Bride and Groom*, and his *Dialogue on Love*. The radically different approaches between these works offer important insights into changes occurring in the philosophical literature about love around Paul's lifetime, in particular regarding the role of women and a religious and eschatological dimension to love and marriage.

The "*On Love*" literature, the first type, often is extremely negative toward *eros*, seeing it as a serious pathological disease in need of treatment.⁵ This is quite different from Paul's attitude toward sexual intercourse, marriage, and love, but does foreshadow somewhat the need that Paul sees to sanctify love and marriage. This philosophical approach might have had some influence on his preference for celibacy. However, in I Cor 7:25–34 this preference is based on internal freedom, along with the expectation of the sudden coming of Christ and the end of the world, without any negative comments on intercourse or marriage as such. Plutarch's *Advice to a Bride and Groom* is actually rather nuanced, with several allusions to the sacred character of marriage. The *Dialogue on Love*, or *Erotikos* is almost dominated by the supernatural character of *eros* (or the god Eros).⁶ In fact the essay, which emphasizes the relationship of *eros* to the gods, in particular *Eros* and *Aphrodite*, reverses the expected roles for the bride and groom. Besides differences between the thought of Paul and Plutarch, there were

(ed., H. Görgemanns, B. Feichtinger, F. Graf, W. Jeanrond, and J. Opsomer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 3–188 (6–7). Going perhaps too far, Scannapieco (83) relates the change in mentality in Plutarch and others to the challenge of Christianity. He sees Dion Chrysostom (primarily in the *Euboian Discourse* (*Discourse* 4) as more interested in the metaphysical, and Plutarch in the theological and mystical implications of marriage (84). Scannapieco (111) cites (from Stobaios 4.23.59 H. [Dion, Loeb fr. VI]: "A woman's piety is the love (*eros*) she shows her husband" (Εὐσέβεια δὲ γυναικεία ὁ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα ἔρως).

⁵ See F.E. Brenk, "Sliding Atoms or Supernatural Light: Plutarch's *Erotikos* and the 'On Eros' Literature," in *El Amor en Plutarco* (ed. J.M. Nieto Ibáñez and R. López López; León: Universidad de León, 2007) 19–26.

⁶ On these gods, see F. Frazier, "Éros, Arès et Aphrodite dans l'*Érotikos*: Une reconsidération de la réponse à Pemptidès (ch. 13–18)," in *Philosophy in Society. Virtues and Values in Plutarch* (ed. J. Ribeiro Ferreira, L. Van der Stockt, and M. Do Céu Fialho; Coimbra/Leuven: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra/Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, 2008) 117–136.

important differences between Paul's thought on love and marriage and that of other thinkers. For example, Musonius Rufus, a near contemporary of Paul, seems to have radically challenged the traditional views of love and marriage and probably influenced Plutarch.⁷

The *On Love* literature was a rather specific genre of literature. A few pages of Theophrastos' *On Love* (fr. L 120), for example, have survived. But we know that Chrysippos (*SVF* 3.97-8), Epikouros (Epicurus) (fr. 409 [Usener]), and others wrote similar treatises. Epikouros' extremely negative portrayal of *eros* is reflected in Lucretius' *On the Universe* (*De Rerum Natura*), which seems to have closely followed Epikouros' huge tome *On Nature* (Περὶ Φύσεως).⁸ The *On Love* of Plutarch, who was about a generation younger than Paul, survives in only a few fragments (frags. 134-138 Sandbach), but seems to have been influenced by Epikouros. The latter's lost work *On Love*, as reconstructed from Lucretius, offered an alternative to Platonic divine (or daimonic) inspiration and was not directed toward a transcendental goal. He undoubtedly began with atoms and molecules, themselves leading to physiological changes in the subject when confronted with an erotic object.⁹ One might expect that he ended

⁷ On this see F.E. Brenk, "We Are of His Race": Paul and the Philosophy of His Time," in F.E. Brenk, *With Unperfumed Voice. Studies in Plutarch, in Greek Literature, Religion and Philosophy, and in the New Testament Background* (Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 21; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007) 402-440 (417-420); and "'Deum...comitari': Rhetoric and Progress in Virtue in Seneca and Paul," in *With Unperfumed Voice*, 441-469; W.R. Bowen, "Musonius and Paul on Marriage," *NTS* 36 (1990) 281-289; J.E. Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity. The Emperor Constantine's Marriage Legislation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 372; an almost identical treatment of pp. 54-64, "Pre-Christian Marriage Ideology and Practice" appeared in "Pagan' and 'Christian' Marriage: The State of the Question," *J ECS* 2 (1994) 361-412. In general she sees Paul as using marriage to establish social boundaries (66-67). See also B.W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows. The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 64-68.

⁸ See M.C. Nussbaum, "Eros and Ethical Norms: Philosophers Respond to a Cultural Dilemma," in *The Sleep of Reason. Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome* (ed. M.C. Nussbaum and J. Sihvola; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 55-119. She suggests (75) that Lucretius, seeing problems inherent in the question of *eros*, thought intercourse would be permissible, if one "yields to human life" but does not overestimate the object of love, as, e.g., might be possible in a long-term relationship based on friendship.

⁹ For Plato's doctrine, see G.W. Most, "Six Remarks on Platonic Eros," in *Erotikon. Essays on Eros, Ancient and Modern* (ed. S. Bartsch and T. Bartscherer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) 33-47; and A.W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). R.D. Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex. A Commentary on De Rerum Natura IV, 1030-1287* (Leiden: Brill, 1987) 122-123, sees Lucretius as very faithful to Epikouros, but thinks Epikouros perhaps emphasized more than Lucretius how *eros* and sex are subject to illusion.

with the desired sublimation of *eros* or sexual desire into *philia* (friendship), a concept of extreme importance for the Epicureans, but which also appears in Plutarch and other authors. Apparently, however, this was not the case.¹⁰ The strongest pronouncements about *philia* appear in *Kyriai Doxai* (*Principal Doctrines*) 27 and 28 (Diogenes Laertios [D.L.], 10.148.10 and 13):

Of all the thing which wisdom procures for one's happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is friendship (φιλία).

The same conviction which inspires confidence that nothing we have to fear is eternal or even of long duration, also includes the observation that even in our limited conditions of life nothing enhances our security so much as friendships (φιλία).

According to modern reconstructions, Epikouros was not, however, a strict reductionist, that is, reducing *eros* to atomic configurations which cause physiological changes.¹¹

To some extent we can reconstruct Epikouros' thought on love (*eros*), but not necessarily marriage, from Lucretius' *On the Universe* 4.1037–1287. This might inspire some respect for the wonders of nature, but as far as *eros* and marriage goes, seems almost entirely negative. A redeeming note in this direction, which offers a hint of *philia*, appears at the conclusion of the book. Here Lucretius remarks on someone gradually falling in love

¹⁰ See on line 5.1019, e.g., G. Campbell, *Lucretius on Creation and Evolution. A Commentary on De Rerum Natura Book Five, Lines 772–1104* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 272–273. Here we find the movement from wild, primitive sex to friendship. For Epicurean friendship in general, see D.K. O'Connor, "The Invulnerable Pleasure of Epicurean Friendship," *GRBS* 30 (1989) 165–186. See also D. Konstan, "Friendship from Epicurus to Philodemus," in *Epicureismo greco e romano* I (ed. G. Giannantoni and M. Gigante; Naples: Bibliopolis, 1996) 387–396, and D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 108–112, esp. 112; J. Boulogne, "Trois Eros?: Comment Plutarque réécrit Platon," in A. Pérez Jiménez et al., *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles*, 215–226 (199–213), and *Plutarque dans le miroir d'Épicure. Analyse d'une critique systématique de l'épicurisme* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2003) 89–90.

¹¹ See M.C. Nussbaum, "Beyond Obsession and Disgust: Lucretius' Genealogy of Love," *Apeiron* 22 (1989) 1–59 (9). Probably the best explanation of Epikouros' position on marriage is T. Brennan, "Epicurus on Sex, Marriage and Children," *CPh* 91 (1996) 346–352, against the position of J. Purington, "Epicurus on the Telos," *Phronesis* 38 (1993) 281–320. At stake is: "[They] say that sex never benefits, but it is desirable, provided that it does not harm." (D.L., 10.118 and *Vatican Sayings* 51) (Brennan 346). After an exhaustive investigation of the Greek usage, he concludes that ἀγαπητὸν εἰ μὴ means, as traditionally translated, "it is surprising," or "it is marvelous" if... Under exceptional circumstances, as shown in Epikouros' will seeking to provide for orphaned children of Epicureans, the Epicurean will get married and raise children. (The reference to children involves a convincing textual correction to D.L., 10.119).

with an ugly but tidy and well-mannered woman. Little by little through habit love is born, just as drops of water falling on a stone gradually wear it away (4.1278–1287).¹² In fact the movement for the Epicureans seems to have been in the opposite direction, from *philia* to a kind of *eros*. Cicero, *On Ends*, 1.66–70, reports that for Epicureans familiarity leads to a love in which friends are loved for their own sake, and that friendship involves a contract among the wise so that they love others more than themselves.¹³

We have quite a few fragments of the *On Love* of Aristotle's student, Theophrastos. The idea of writing a work *On Love* apparently was an invention of Plato's age, centuries before Paul.¹⁴ *On the Nature of Love or of Virtues* is ascribed to Kritias (Critias), a contemporary and uncle of Plato (DK 88 B42).¹⁵ Several Peripatetics wrote on the subject as well, most notably Aristotle, the founder of the school. Contrary to our expectations for a scholar whose writings are so unemotional, he was extremely fond of his wife and after her death, of his slave concubine.¹⁶ His *Erotikos*, *Symposion*, and *Opinions on Love* (*Theseis Erotikai*) are all, unfortunately, lost (D.L., 5.22–27).¹⁷ Theophrastos, his successor, and quite a number of other philosophers followed Aristotle in this “erotic” endeavor.¹⁸ One expects that Aristotelians like Theophrastos attempted to give prominence to biological and physiological aspects. Listed after Theophrastos' *Erotikos* (D.L., 10.43) is “another work on love” (ἄλλο περὶ ἔρωτος). A number of very short and disconnected fragments of these have survived.¹⁹ Evidently his phenomenological, and negative definition of *eros* was well-known:

¹² See D. Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 135–136, 148–150.

¹³ See Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 112.

¹⁴ Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex*, 101–102, who thinks the title possibly was inspired by Plato's περὶ τῶν ἐρωτικῶν λόγων in *Symposion* 172B (cf. *Phaidros* 227C).

¹⁵ Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex*, 102, note 3.

¹⁶ See now R. Mayhew, *The Female in Aristotle's Biology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹⁷ J. Sihvola, “Aristotle on Sex and Love,” in Nussbaum and Sihvola, *The Sleep of Reason*, 200–221 (206); Brenk, “Sliding Atoms,” 21. See also D.B. Nagle, *The Household as the Foundation of Aristotle's Polis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and J.T. Fitzgerald, ed., *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge 2008).

¹⁸ For these authors see H. Cancik and H. Schneider, eds., *Brill's New Pauly. Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World. Antiquity* (14 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2001–2009), e.g., s.v. “Aristotle.” See also A.W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*; and Sihvola, “Aristotle on Sex and Love,” 200–221.

¹⁹ Sources in W.W. Fortenbaugh, P.M. Huby, R.W. Sharples, D. Gutas, et al., *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought, and Influence* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 1.28–29; 2.382–390.

Love is an excess of a certain irrational desire, whose coming is swift and parting slow.²⁰

Libanios, the famous orator of the Imperial period, cites another saying:

... the soul which is not preoccupied with external matters is held in thrall by erotic passions (ἐροτικαῖς πάθεσι), and *eros* especially afflicts those who are not engaged in other activities.²¹

Besides this warning to academics to stay as busy as possible, his *Erotikos* was rather lively, with several striking and even problematic *exempla*.²² These included the love of a certain Euxynthetos for Leukokomas, a boy who forced him to travel long distances to fetch his pet dog.²³ Such stories seem to have floated through the literature. Plutarch alludes to the same story at *Erotikos* 766C, attaching to it two other stories, also possibly from Theophrastos, those of Gorgo of Crete and Parakypsoa ("Leaner out the Window") of Salamis on Cyprus. Both young women were turned to stone by the gods for their insensitivity toward their male lovers. Theophrastos may also have included other stories such as how Amasis of Elea won the heart of his beloved, the lovesickness of a goose for the boy Amphilocho, of a ram and goose for Glauka of Chios, and of a dolphin for a boy.²⁴ Possibly, like Lucretius later, Theophrastos had a behaviorist interest in the similarities between humans and animals. These citations may not be representative, but nothing hints at the *exempla* of love, much less heterosexual, married love, on the grand scale with which Plutarch closed his *Erotikos*. Like most of the authors of the "On Love" literature, there is no hint of the transcendental in these fragments. As for the Hellenistic period, Diogenes Laertios attributed works on love to two of the greatest Stoics, Kleanthes (D.L. 7.175; not in *SVF*) and Chrysippos (D.L., 7.130 = *SVF* 3.716–22).²⁵

²⁰ Stobaios, *Anthology* 4.20.64 (IV, p. 468.4–7 Hense); Fortenbaugh, *Theophrastus*, 381–383, fr. 557.

²¹ Libanios, *Progymnasmata* 3 (*Chreiai*) 4.1.3 (Teubner, vol. 8, 97.11–98.9 Foerster); Fortenbaugh, *Theophrastus* 1992, 382–383, fr. 558.

²² Strabon speaks rather ambiguously of the citation being from Theophrastos' τοῦ περὶ ἔρωτος λόγου.

²³ Strabon, *Geography* 10.4.12 (Lasserre, Budé, VII, 92.14–93); Fortenbaugh, *Theophrastus*, 384–385, fr. 560.

²⁴ Amasis of Elea (Athenaios, 13.21) (Fortenbaugh, *Theophrastus*, fr. 561, pp. 384–385); a goose in love with a boy (from Ailianos [Aelian]) *On the Nature of Animals* 5.29) (Fortenbaugh, *Theophrastus*, fr. 567B, pp. 388–389).

²⁵ There is a Περὶ Ἐρώτων is attributed to Persaios (D.L., 7.36). Pseudo-Loukianos' (Pseudo-Lucian's) dialogue, Ἐρώτες, like Plutarch's *Erotikos* but in a much inferior way,

Probably the most influential work *On Love* was that of Epikouros. Diogenes Laertios, puts it (fr. 409 [Usener]) almost at the top of the list of his works. His portrayal of *eros* in the extant fragments, with one exception, is negative. This undoubtedly reflects the sentiments of his major work *On Love*, which probably was echoed in Epikouros' massive work *On Nature*.²⁶ Lucretius' account of *amor* in his *On the Nature of the Universe*, includes material from the Hippocratic corpus, suggesting that Epikouros' approach, too, was in part medical and pathological.²⁷ Closer to Paul's time we find something similar in a fragment from Herculaneum of the first century BC Epicurean philosopher Philodemus:

... similarly let us take a clear rational look at the evil involved. We can follow the same procedure we used in evaluating the effects of erotic desire. In that case we enumerated all the pain involved for the persons afflicted by it and the major inconveniences caused, including at times certain particularly painful evils.²⁸

rhetorically debates the merits of homosexual or heterosexual love. See also sections of Athenaios, Book 13, *passim*, and Stobaios (4.20 W-H), which are devoted to love. In Latin the most notable texts are Lucretius, Book 4, and Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.68–76. On Cicero see M. Graver, *Cicero on the Emotions. Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) xxvi–xxvii, 64–67, and 178–180. Cicero, like Plutarch at *Erotikos* 750B, alludes to Laios in Euripides' play *Chrysippos*. Cicero also mentions, like Plutarch *On Love*, fr. 135, with disapproval, driving out one love by another (cf. Lucretius, 4.1069–1072 and Epikouros, *Vatican Sayings* 18). For the Romans, see also S. Bartsch, "Eros and the Roman Philosopher," in Bartsch and Bartscherer, *Erotikon. Essays on Eros, Ancient and Modern*, 59–83.

²⁶ See Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex*, 112–115. The matter is much debated. E.g., B. Arkins, "Epicurus and Lucretius on Sex, Love, and Marriage," *Apeiron* 18 (1984) 141–143, argued that Epikouros only condemned *eros* that destroyed tranquility (*ataraxia*). In a comment on Plato's *Phaidros*, Hermeias gives an Epicurean definition of *eros* as "an intense craving for sexual intercourse accompanied by frenzy and anguish" (Hermeias, *In Platonis Phaedrum* p. 3 Couvreur); see also Brown, 113. Most scholars today take D.L., 10.119 (*Letter to Menoikeus*) as a general rule against marriage. So C.W. Chilton, "Did Epicurus Approve of Marriage? A Study of Diogenes Laertius X, 119," *Phronesis* 5 (1960) 71–75; J. Rist, *Epicurus. An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 134, and "Epicurus on Friendship," *CPh* 75 (1980) 121–129 (123); A. Grilli, "Epicuro e il matrimonio (D.L. X, 119)," *Rivista Critica di Storia di Filosofia* 26 (1971) 51–56; M.C. Nussbaum, "Beyond Obsession and Disgust" (15, note 26). Brown, 121–127, notes that Lucretius, though somewhat moderate about marriage, e.g., at 4.1233–1277, never gives it a positive endorsement.

²⁷ See Campbell, *Lucretius on Creation and Evolution*, 117–119; also 64, 117–119, and 154–155 for Lucretius' approach to sexual desire, orgasm, and generation; and M.C. Nussbaum, "Therapeutic Arguments and Structures of Desire," in *Feminism and Ancient Philosophy* (ed. J.K. Ward; London/New York: Routledge, 1996) 195–216 (212).

²⁸ *P.Herc.* 182, col. VII, lines 16–25. Scannapieco, "Polemiche antiepicuree nell'*Amatorius*," 86, citing G. Indelli, *Filodemo, L'ira* (La scuola di Epicuro 5; Naples: Bibliopolis, 1988) 155. *P.Herc.* 1384 could be a fragment of a possible Περὶ Ἐρωτος of Philodemus.

The movement from *eros* to *philia* was strong in the Stoic tradition and in other schools and is fundamental to Plutarch's own works on love (e.g. *Erotikos* 758C).²⁹ For example, in the *Erotikos* Plutarch argues that the transformation of *eros* into *philia* makes a woman's love more lasting and superior than a boy's.³⁰ Within marriage, sexual desire and erotic attachment should be transformed into the deep and lasting mutual love (*philia*) of the spouses (752C–D).³¹ But such a stand, possibly later in Plutarch's life, is radically different from fr. 135 of *On Eros*. Here he characterized different approaches, including love, as: disease, desire (or lust [*epithymia*]), friendship, madness (*mania*)—qualified as a daimonic or divine movement of the soul—and finally, *eros* (Eros) simply as a god.

The depiction of *eros* in the Plutarchan *On Love* fragments is astounding for one acquainted solely with his *Erotikos*. *Eros* is described, as we have seen, as a dangerous disease or mental affliction (*nosos*, *pathos*, *mania*, *parakope*, *phrenetismos*). Transcendental beauty or a transcendental goal is not on the horizon. At one point he actually reinforces two negative *topoi*, one of Theophrastos: "*Eros* is an excess of a certain irrational desire, whose coming is swift and parting slow;" and another of Epikouros: "... the passion of love is dissolved when sight, company, and living together are removed" (*Vatican Sayings* 18).³² According to Plutarch:

²⁹ On the Stoics, see A.W. Price, "Plato, Zeno, and the Object of Love," in Nussbaum and Sihvola, *The Sleep of Reason*, 170–199. See also D.B. Martin, "Paul without Passion: On Paul's Rejection of Desire in Sex and Marriage, in *Constructing Early Christian Families. Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (ed. H. Moxnes; London: Routledge 1997) 201–215. He notes how Christian marriage in Paul should be without passion, citing I Cor 7 and I Thess: 4 (201–202), relating ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας to the Stoic position.

³⁰ See F. Frazier, "L'Érotikos: un éloge du Dieu Éros?: Une relecture du dialogue de Plutarque," *Ploutarchos*, n.s. 3 (2005/2006) 63–102, esp. 73 and 93. For homosexual and heterosexual love in the *Erotikos*, see also B. Feichtinger, "Soziologisches und sozialgeschichtliches zu Erotik, Liebe und Geschlechterverhältnis," in H. Görgemanns et al., *Plutarch. Dialog über die Liebe*, 236–273.

³¹ For the Stoic distinction between *eros* and lust, and *eros* as a preferred in certain cases (e.g. procreation), and as altruistic, see E. Asmis, "The Stoics on Women," in *Feminism and Ancient Philosophy* (ed. J.K. Ward; London: Routledge, 1996) 68–92 (74–77). A. Payne, "The Teleology of the Ascent in Plato's *Symposium*," *Apeiron*, 41 (2008) 123–146 (esp. 145). D.C. Schindler, "Plato and the Problem of Love: On the Nature of Eros in the *Symposium*," *Apeiron* 40 (2007) 199–220 (esp. 213), argues that the love of the absolute (the Good) does not exclude the relative, i.e. the personal object of love. M.C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 474–481, stresses how ancient authors call for compassion, reciprocity, and individuality. See also J. Opsomer, "Eros in Plutarch's moralischer Psychologie," in Görgemanns et al., *Plutarch. Dialog über die Liebe*, 208–235.

³² The Epicureans may be alluded to as those "without feelings of love" (ἀνέραστοι), who identify *eros* with disorderly desire (ἐπιθυμία) and enter into marriages without it (767C), but the passage also resembles attacks on the Stoics.

... love is not born suddenly and all at once like anger but catches fire gently. Once taken hold in the soul, it endures for a long time, even into old age. Even when it dies out, it still leaves behind a trail of hot ash and smoldering embers (fr. 137).

He also discusses love as a passive (or pathological disposition [*pathetike diathesis*]). In this explanation, the lover requires a particular disposition which renders him susceptible to influences deriving from the active agent, that is, the beloved (fr. 134). The negative aspect is strong. *Eros* is “graceful and beguiling, like an endearing child in one’s arms,” but turns into a ferocious beast (fr. 136), or “whereas fire burns only those who touch it, the beautiful kindle a flame even in those who stand at a distance” (fr. 138).

Great allowances always need to be made for different genres. Possibly, too, in the preserved fragments, the opinion is not Plutarch’s own, but of one of his speakers. However, Stobaios (Stobaeus) while introducing these exceedingly negative fragments strongly suggests that the thought is Plutarch’s own. To the pull of the genre, one should probably also consider the work as early.³³ Finally, even in the *On Love* fragment, Plutarch lists *eros* as a daimonic or divine movement of the soul, and finally, *eros* (Eros) simply as a god, both of which were unthinkable for an Epicurean.

The second type of genre to be examined here is that treating marriage, sometimes referred to as *Περὶ Γάμου* (*On Marriage*) literature. Here the fundamental themes centered around the role of marriage in society, in particular as essential for procreation and as the foundation of the state (*polis*). We can now move on to Plutarch’s *Advice to a Bride and Groom*.³⁴ Though modern scholars tend to put this work in the *On Marriage* genre (*Περὶ Γάμου*), it really is more “advice to a bride and groom,” or better yet, “advice to a bride, with a little bit thrown in for the groom,” in spite of Plutarch saying he is writing “a compendium of what you, brought up in philosophy, have often heard (138C).” Eurydike, the bride, was the

³³ For Plutarch’s anti-Epicurean prejudices, see P. Gordon, “Remembering the Garden: The Trouble with Women in the School of Epicurus,” in *Philodemus and the New Testament World* (SNT 111; ed. J.T. Fitzgerald, D. Obink, and G.S. Holland; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 221–244.

³⁴ See *Plutarch’s Advice to the Bride and Groom, and A Consolation to His Wife* (ed. S.B. Pomeroy; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp., S.B. Pomeroy, “Reflections on Plutarch, *Advice to the Bride and Groom*,” 33–58; L. Goessler, “Advice To the Bride and Groom: Plutarch Gives a Detailed Account of His Views on Marriage,” 97–115; R. Hawley, “Practicing What You Preach: Plutarch’s Sources and Treatment,” 116–127; C. Patterson, “Plutarch’s *Advice to the Bride and Groom*: Traditional Wisdom Through a Philosophic Lens,” 128–137 (= *ANRW* II.33.5 [1991] 4709–4723); and J.A. McNamara, “Gendering Virtue,” 151–161.

daughter of a well-educated woman, Klea, the dedicatee of Plutarch's *The Virtues of Women* and *On Isis and Osiris*, who had entrusted Eurydike's education to Plutarch.³⁵ Thus, Plutarch actually encouraged the education of at least upper class women. Since the essay was not strictly speaking a treatise on marriage, it was not necessary to include the *topos* of the home (*oikos*) as the foundation of the *polis*, or to devote space to procreation as the main reason for marriage. However, Plutarch seems to have a different approach to marriage itself, in which the personal aspects and a Platonic "eschatological" goal had precedence. At least superficially, though, the treatise seems to exaggerate the subordination and submission of the bride to her husband, being primarily concerned with how to retain the affection of her husband. Some modern interpreters underscore her complete subjection. Nikolaidis, for example, is upset by assertions that the husband should control the wife as the soul controls the body (142E) and that a wife should have no feelings of her own (140A). Nikolaidis excuses them as "an overstatement, not a reasoned position."³⁶ This subjection includes her even pretending to be happy when her husband sleeps with *hetairai*. When her husband goes on a drunken orgy with an *hetaira* or female slave, according to Plutarch, he does so out of respect, not asking her to participate in such debauchery (140B).³⁷ But he insists on the husband tempering his actions toward his wife by love. Nikolaidis cites *Erotikos* 769D–E: "In marriage a greater good is to love (τὸ ἐρᾶν) than to be loved (τοῦ ἐρᾶσθαι). It rescues us from many errors, or rather from all errors that ruin or disfigure marriage."³⁸

One should also consider two passages, 144D and 144F–145A. In the first he attacks the double standard for the psychological pain it causes the wife, all for "a trivial pleasure." In the second, he emphasizes respect for the wife and the ridiculousness of the man asking her to be faithful when he is having affairs with other women. As noted, he virtually omits mention of procreation in most of the essay. At 144B, when marriage appears, it is in a religious context, that of rites associated with the sowing season: "The most sacred of all sowings is that in marriage for the procreation of

³⁵ B. Pech, "Prosopographie des amis de Plutarque," *ANRW* II.33.6 (1992) 4831–4893 (4842–4843 and 4849).

³⁶ A.G. Nikolaidis, "Plutarch on Women and Marriage," *WS* 110 (1997) 58–63 (78).

³⁷ On the traditional elements, see E. Cantarella, "Gender, Sexuality, and the Law," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Law* (ed. D. Cohen; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 236–253.

³⁸ Nikolaidis, "Plutarch on Women and Marriage," 63.

children.”³⁹ For this reason both spouses are to keep themselves pure and refrain from “unholy and unlawful” intercourse with anyone else.⁴⁰ If they are against having children, they should not have intercourse; nor should they generate children they will later regret having.⁴¹

Still, Plutarch’s focus is not relegated to this life. A passage with eschatological allusions appears at 145B. Here he enjoins the young spouse, Pollianos, to study philosophy, not only for his own moral improvement but for his wife’s. When he returns home, he is to discuss with her the topics treated in class. Here Plutarch adapts a line from Homer’s parting of Hektor from Andromache (*Iliad* 6.429):

But you are to me father and noble mother, and brother; you are my youthful husband.

In the imagined speech of his wife, Plutarch’s husband is far superior to Hektor:

But you are to me, guide, philosopher, and teacher in all that is most lovely and divine (τῶν καλλίστων καὶ θειοτάτων).

³⁹ See K. O’Brien Wicker, “First Century Marriage Ethics: A Comparative Study of the Household Codes and Plutarch’s Conjugal Precepts,” in *No Famine in the Land. Studies in Honor of John L. McKenzie* (ed. J.W. Flanagan and A. Weisbrod Robinson; Claremont: Scholars Press, 1975) 141–154. On the pervasiveness of religion in married life, see M. Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion* (London: Routledge, 2002) 215–217, 225; M. Bassani, *Sacraria. Ambienti e piccoli edifici per il culto domestico in area vesuviana* (Rome: Quasar, 2008); and C.B. Patterson, “Marriage and the Married Woman in Athenian Law,” in *Women’s History and Ancient History* (ed. S.B. Pomeroy; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991) 48–72 (54, notes 34 and 38).

⁴⁰ For medical writers considering intercourse dangerous, at least for certain persons, see C.A. Osiek and D.L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World. Households and House Churches* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 104–107.

⁴¹ For high ethical ideals in much of Graeco-Roman marriage, see the excellent treatment in J.E. Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity*, 369–380; M.Y. MacDonald, “The Ideal of the Christian Couple: Ign. Pol. 5.1–2 Looking Back to Paul,” *NTS* 40 (1994) 105–125, esp. 120–122; and D.K. Darko, *No Longer Living as the Gentiles. Differentiation and Shared Ethical Values in Ephesians 4.17–6.9* (Library of New Testament Studies; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2008), esp. 71–108, on the *Haustafeln* not being a Graeco-Roman *topos*, not adopted by Christians to integrate themselves and avoid trouble, and not compromising their values. He notes, too, that many authors avoided the *oikos/polis* (household/state) argument (76–78); and that Christianity gave these traditional *topoi* a new Christological basis (106–107). See also E. Gritti, “La legittimità filosofica e giuridica del matrimonio: gli Stoici, Plutarco e i Cristiani,” in *Il matrimonio dei Cristiani. Egesi biblica e diritto romano* (Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 114; Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2009) 595–615, esp., 605 and note 27, who note how Plutarch emphasizes interpersonal relationships and the sacrality of marriage, citing *Dialogue on Love* 750C.

Frequently in Plutarch expressions like this refer to the Platonic “blessed vision” of the Forms or Ideas in the next world, which he sometimes identifies with or associates with God. Musonius Rufus was bolder. Girls should receive the same education as boys (*Diatribes* 4 and 5). Plutarch’s Eurydike, the bride, only seems here to receive a second-hand philosophical education (*paideia*) (145E). However, at the beginning of the essay he alludes to both bride and groom having attended his or another’s philosophy lectures (138C). Nikolaidis stresses that male superiority should be based on intellectual qualities, citing *Erotikos* 754D and *Advice to a Bride and Groom* 139B.⁴² In fact though, Plutarch phrases it in a slightly different way: “so what is wrong with an intelligent woman who is older piloting a younger man” (754D).

One recent interpretation puts a novel twist on the seemingly male-chauvinist oriented counsel in *Advice to a Bride and Groom*, seeing it as a handbook for manipulating a husband. While seemingly the submissive and “traditional wife,” through moral superiority she becomes the stronger partner. Plutarch, thus, educates Eurydike in strategies (“subtle wiles”) for domination, introducing a new concept of virtue and femininity. The secret to real happiness is in finding “a man strong enough to master her, but she accomplishes her own subordination, not to be equal but to choose her inequality.” Or should we say, pretending to be inferior, she exercises her superiority.⁴³

Plutarch ends the essay with another hint at the supernatural aspect of marriage. The religious dimension of marriage in ancient Greece and Rome has already been noted above. In his treatment of the purpose of intercourse, just before mentioning the Muses, Plutarch quotes Sophokles’ epithet for Aphrodite. She is “Kythereia the Bountiful” (*Kythereia Eukarpos*), in his interpretation, one who produces children. Significantly, *eros* is only mentioned twice in this treatise, once to claim that the *eros* of newlyweds blazes up like fire but is not enduring or constant unless it is rational and based on character (138F). The second is a reference to the orator Gorgias’ love for a domestic slave girl, something which destroyed his domestic harmony (144C). The god Eros is not mentioned at all in Plutarch’s treatise. He ends it, however, with reference to the Muses overlooking marriage: may she (the bride) share “not only in roses, but also in

⁴² Nikolaidis, “Plutarch on Women and Marriage,” 76–82. See also 83–86 on women as intellectuals: e.g., 769B: “There is no need to discuss their intelligence and purpose (σωφροσύνη and σύνεσις).”

⁴³ McNamara, “Gendering Virtue,” 160.

the fruits that the Muses bring and graciously bestow upon admirers of education and philosophy" (146A).⁴⁴ He seems here to reflect Musonius, who reserved his theological observations for the end (*Diatribes* 14.65–67), and possibly this is a touch belonging to the genre. Plutarch, nonetheless, had already referred to Hermes (reason, philosophy) and Aphrodite (pleasure) as patrons of marriage (138D), mentioned the gods as a wife's best friends (140D), spoke of Hera Gamelia (Protectress of Marriage) (141D–F), and advised the bride to invoke Aphrodite when the couple get mad at each other and head for separate beds (143D).

Musonius through almost his whole treatment of marriage sees it only in philosophical terms, mainly as a union of minds and hearts, based on justice, and the like (14.65, 14.67). Only at the end (leaving apart the sections on whether one should bring up all one's children, and on children's duties to their parents), does he mention anything religious at all. Here the "great" gods, Hera, Eros, and Aphrodite, are associated with the goal of marriage, the procreation of children, itself necessary for the continuation of the *polis* and the human race (*Diatribes* 14.61–68). Being a Stoic, what Musonius actually believed about the individual gods is hard to say. He probably detected the divine in the natural drive toward procreation and the generation of children. He qualifies his words, however, with the phrase "according to common opinion" (παρ' ἀνθρώποις), in referring to the belief that certain gods watch over marriage. This could mean that ordinary people, but not necessarily himself as a Stoic philosopher, believed this. Still, he might have considered the gods a manifestation of the divine *Logos* in the universe. This is the only passage in which Eros, Hera, or Aphrodite appear. As in Paul and the New Testament, the word *eros* itself, as erotic or sexual desire, never appears, though Musonius does employ the word in its verbal forms in the sense of "lovers," "beloved," etc. His preference, judging by the six places the concept of erotic love appears, is "*aphrodisia*" rather than *eros*. Just as Musonius reserved any comment about the gods to the end of his tractate on marriage, so did Plutarch reserve the end of his essay for his fullest inclusion of the gods.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ See G.J. Reydam-Schils, "Musonius Rufus, Porphyry, and Christians in Counter-Point on Marriage and the Good," in *Metamorphoses of Neoplatonism* (ed. A. Kijewska; Lublin: Wydaw KUL, 2004) 151–168.

⁴⁵ See M. Lipka, *Roman Gods. A Conceptual Approach* (RGRW 167; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009) esp., 181–185 on the role of women; and L. Caldwell, "Nuptiarum Sollemnia?: Girls' Transition to Marriage in the Roman Jurists," in *Finding Persephone. Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean* (ed., M. Parca and A. Tzanetou; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) 209–217.

Several aspects of women and marriage which appear in *Advice to a Bride and Groom*, then, suggest an affinity with the teachings of Musonius Rufus.⁴⁶ Among these is marriage as a partnership—though the definition goes back to Aristotle—with a stress on common sharing, and the education of women. Reydam-Schils sees Musonius as mediating between tradition and innovative philosophy. He, thus, offered a model for Christian thinkers on how to remain traditional, yet be non-conformist. In her view he saw conjugal love as the highest form of *eros*, but that Christian thinkers tended to follow Seneca rather than Musonius.⁴⁷ In her book on the Roman Stoics, she notes a progressive altruism and integration of the philosophical life into marriage and parenthood.⁴⁸ Nussbaum sees Musonius' very strong position against the double standard and his prohibition against intercourse for pleasure as exceptional. She is troubled, however, by his concentration on the harm illicit sexual activity does to the man himself, while not mentioning the damage to the wife. She attributes the movement away from Stoic pederasty to his Roman culture, but notes as rather original, the universal capacity for excellence, and gender symmetry and self-mastery within the concept of companionate marriage. She finds something fundamentally asymmetrical in Plutarch, however, since the "sharing of soul" (*koinonia* [κοινωνία], *symbiosis* [συμβίωσις]) found in Musonius, *Diatribes* 13A–13B) is not included in *Advice to a Bride and Groom* 140F and 143A. On the other hand, there is a positive evaluation of the sexual act as enhancing the bond between the spouses (143D).

Still the very positive depiction of love and *eros/Eros* in the *Erotikos* marks a sea-change from the tone of Plutarch's *On Love*, or even *Advice to a Bride and Groom*. In summary, in the *Erotikos* Plutarch reacts strongly to sentiments found in the *On Love* genre and also tries to surpass the treatises on marriage through "emulation," by adding a stronger supernatural and eschatological dimension to his concept of marriage. He even turns Platonic arguments about ideal love against the homoerotic descriptions

⁴⁶ An enormous amount has been written lately on Musonius Rufus' views on marriage; see M.C. Nussbaum, "The Incomplete Feminism of Musonius Rufus, Platonist, Stoic, and Roman," in Nussbaum and Sihvola, *The Sleep Of Reason*, 283–326, esp. 298, 300, 308. The main texts can be found in her appendix (314–320). See also her "Musonius Rufus: Enemy of Double Standards for Men and Women?," in *Double Standards in the Ancient and Medieval World* (Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft 1; ed. K. Pohlmann; Göttingen: Duehrkoph and Radicke, 2000) 221–246.

⁴⁷ G.J. Reydam-Schils, "Musonius Rufus, Porphyry, and Christians," 158–159.

⁴⁸ G.J. Reydam-Schils, *The Roman Stoics. Self, Responsibility, and Affection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) 129; see also 53–82.

of Plato.⁴⁹ For the pederastic, or boy-love-leaning treatment of love in Plato's dialogues such as the *Symposion* and *Phaidros*, we now find within marriage an *eros* which remains but also transforms itself into *philia*. Even if muted, there are allusions to the Platonic role of *eros/Eros* as *mystagogos* of the soul. In marriage both the spouses, through their mutual love, are led by Eros toward real and eternal beauty, whose contemplation results in perfect happiness (esp. 765A–766C).

While not necessarily condemning all homosexual or boy love, as Musonius Rufus so strongly did, Plutarch clearly treats women as equally worthy. On occasion or in certain cases, he sees women as more worthy of love than boys, while extolling above all, married love (e.g., 751F–752A).⁵⁰ The only real extant *symposion* Plutarch wrote, the *Dinner of the Seven Sages*, mostly ignores love, but an original element is substitution of heterosexual for homosexual love in it.⁵¹ In the *Erotikos* Plutarch even suggests that married love can lead to the “blessed vision” of the Forms (762A), as we have seen.⁵² Scannapieco notes that both Dion of Prousa and Plutarch treat love as something sacred, exalting the dignity of the

⁴⁹ See P.A. Stadter, “‘Subject to the Erotic’: Male Sexual Behaviour in Plutarch,” in *Ethics and Rhetoric. Classical Essays for Donald Russell on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (ed. D. Innes, H. Hine and C. Pelling; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 221–236. He sees (223) the *Erotikos* as a “sophisticated and passionate reinterpretation and rebuttal of two of Plato’s most famous dialogues, the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, citing M. Trapp, “Plato’s *Phaedrus* in Second-Century Greek Literature,” in *Antonine Literature* (ed. D.A. Russell; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) 141–173 (157–161). They are followed by J. Boulogne, “Trois Eros?: Comment Plutarque réécrit Platon,” 199–213; and (with emphasis!) J. Rist, “Plutarch’s *Amatorius*: A Commentary on Plato’s Theories of Love?,” *CQ* 51 (2001) 557–575.

⁵⁰ For Musonius Rufus and the Christians, see I. Ramelli, *Musonio Rufo. Diatribe, frammenti e testimonianze* (Milan: Bompiani, 2001) 25–30.

⁵¹ So J. Mossman, “Plutarch’s *Dinner Of The Seven Wise Men*,” in *Plutarch and His Intellectual World* (ed. J. Mossman; London: Duckworth, 1997) 119–140, esp., 124–126, 133–134. See also D.E. Aune, “Septem Sapientium Convivium,” in *Plutarch’s Theological Writings and Early Christians Literature* (Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti 3 (ed. H.D. Betz; Leiden: Brill, 1972) 51–105; S. Jedrkiewicz, *Il convitato sullo sgabello. Plutarco, Esopo ed i Sette Savi* (Filologia e Critica 80; Pisa and Rome: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1997), review, F.E. Brenk and F. Lo Cascio, *CR* 50 (2000) 286–287, reprinted in *With Unperfumed Voice*, 233–234; A. Busine, *Les Sept Sages de la Grèce Antique. Transmission et utilisation d’un patrimoine légendaire d’Hérodote à Plutarque* (Paris: De Boccard, 2002); and D.L. Leão, “Plutarco e a tradição dos Sete Sábios,” in *Plutarc a la seva època: Paideia i societat* (ed. M. Jufresa, F. Mestre, P. Gomez, and P. Gilabert; Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2005) 235–242.

⁵² See F.E. Brenk, “Plutarch’s *Erotikos*: The Drag Down Pulled Up,” in *Plutarch. Robert Flacellière (1904–1982)*. In *Memoriam* (ICS 13.2 [1988]) (ed. M. Marcovich, F.E. Brenk, J.P. Hershbell, and P.A. Stadter) 457–472; reprinted in F.E. Brenk, *Relighting the Souls. Studies in Plutarch, in Greek Literature, Religion, and Philosophy, and in the New Testament Background* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998) 13–27.

individual, opening up new horizons, and leading to a deep spirituality.⁵³ Elsewhere, especially in *On the E at Delphi*, Plutarch identifies Being and the Good with God. So in a sense, proper married love should lead one to God.⁵⁴ Going beyond Musonius Rufus, Plutarch provocatively, though logically from a Platonic standpoint, suggests that a more capable wife should be head of the household.⁵⁵ Some skeptics might ask, however, if a mere reversal of the power relationship is really an improvement. In the *Erotikos* the future wife, Ismenodora, is a wealthy woman, possibly of Italian or Roman descent, and twice the age of her spouse, Bacchon.

Plutarch sees love as divine, like Plato and most Greeks, but unlike Plato, then, he offers a strong challenge to homosexual love.⁵⁶ Ironically, Plutarch's title, *Erotikos*, defeats expectations, a piece of the *On Love* literature.⁵⁷ An indication of the contrast between the transcendental, Platonic type of erotic literature, such as the *Phaidros*—which he alludes to in the beginning of his essay—and the “scientific” can be found in a passage speaking of erotic passion:

This warmth not does not, as someone has affirmed, set up a quake that leads to the formation of seed through the gliding of atoms that are rubbed off in smooth, tickling contact... rather, it opens the way to acquiescence and affection... to a discernment as to whether the thoughts of the beloved may contain an image cut to the pattern of ideal beauty [περίκοπτα τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ εἰδωλόν] (765C).⁵⁸

⁵³ Scannapieco, “Polemiche antiepicuree nell'*Amatorius*,” 112.

⁵⁴ The doctrine goes back primarily to Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaidros*. For an interesting twist in interpreting Plato, see F.C. White, “Beauty of Soul and Speech in Plato's *Symposium*,” *CQ* 58 (2008) 69–82, who holds that Alkibiades' speech (on Socrates' virtue) is more important than that of Diotima (vision of Beauty).

⁵⁵ Winter discusses the problem in *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 116–119.

⁵⁶ On these, see Trapp, “Plato's *Phaedrus* in Second-Century Greek Literature.”

⁵⁷ See F. Frazier, “*L'Erotikos*: un éloge du Dieu Éros?” (77, note 75), citing D. Babut, *Plutarque et le stoïcisme* (Paris 1969) 354–355; and 77, note 76, citing Babut, “Du scepticisme au dépassement de la raison chez Plutarque,” in *Parerga: choix d'articles de Daniel Babut (1974–1994)* (Collection de la Maison de l'Orient méditerranéen 24. Série littéraire et philosophique 6; ed. D. Babut; Lyon: Maison de l'Orient, 1994) 549–581.

⁵⁸ Plutarch seems to have in mind Epikouros; cf. fr. 311 (Usener). For this ascent, see F.E. Brenk, “Plutarch's *Erotikos*: The Drag Down Pulled Up,” and “All for Love. The Rhetoric of Exaggeration in Plutarch's *Erotikos*,” in *Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in Plutarch* (Collection d'Études Classiques 11; ed. L. Van der Stockt; Namur: Société des Études Classiques, 2000) 45–60; reprinted in Brenk, *With Unperfumed Voice*, 84–99. For Dion's strong condemnation of pederastic love, see F.E. Brenk, “Dion on the Simple and Self-Sufficient Life,” in *Dio Chrysostom. Politics, Letters, and Philosophy* (ed. S. Swain; Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2000) 261–278, reprinted in *With Unperfumed Voice*, 279–300.

The passage seems to be directed against the *On Love* literature and in particular Epikouros or even Lucretius.⁵⁹ At the same time, as Nussbaum points out, there exists a misconception in the modern understanding of ancient philosophy, and a different modern approach. She sees all the philosophers after Plato as feeling a compulsive need to moralize about *eros*, hedging love and sexual desire in with a whole complex of ethical norms. The real importance of the Greek debate for her is its highly ethical character, with much said about generosity and restraint. The object of *eros* is not like food, but another human person, who can be gravely harmed both psychologically and ethically. Moreover, in harming the sexual object, the person morally harms himself.⁶⁰ Accordingly, all the philosophers, in her view, had to treat *eros* as a special case. For a number of reasons, then, the attempt to explain the erotic in largely physiological causes ran up against serious obstacles.⁶¹

Not only the Greeks but also the Romans treated love in a highly ethical way. Rebecca Langlands has recently championed the idea of a high ideal of morality in marriage in a large part of Roman society, while at the same time warning against treating Roman society as monolithic. She appeals to the ideology and cult of *pudicitia* (modesty, chastity, faithfulness to marriage vows), the concept of *infamia* (loss of a good name), the acceptance of the gods as a fact in everyday life, including marriage, and the importance of sexual morality in the cultural memory, the “common language of intersubjective meaning.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Frs. 134–138, in F.H. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia* XV. *Fragments* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969) (all from Stobaios, respectively: 4.20.34; 20.67; 20.68; 20.69; 21.25; pp. 444, 468, 470, and 492 Hense). The fragments have been treated recently by F. Frazier, “*L'Érotikos* et les fragments *Sur l'amour* de Stobée,” in *Os fragmentos de Plutarco e a recepção da sua obra* (ed. J. Ribeiro Ferreira and D. Ferreira Leão; Coimbra: Instituto de Estudos Clássicos, 2003) 63–87. See also J. Opsomer, “Eros in Plutarch's moralischer Psychologie,” esp. 217, note 45.

⁶⁰ Nussbaum, “Eros and Ethical Norms,” 58–59, 87.

⁶¹ See also R.A. Wright, “Plutarch on Moral Progress,” in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought* (ed. J.T. Fitzgerald; London/New York: Routledge, 2008) 136–150, esp. 146; and in the same volume, J. Ware, “Moral Progress and Divine Power in Seneca and Paul,” 267–283, esp. 278.; D.C. Aune, “Passions in the Pauline Epistles: The Current State of Research,” 221–237, esp. 230–231; and T. Engberg-Pedersen, “The Logic of Action in Paul: How Does He Differ from the Moral Philosophers on Spiritual and Moral Progression and Regression?,” 238–266, esp. 261.

⁶² R. Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) esp. 18–19, 25–32, and 364–365. S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) gives a good survey of the Greek philosophical background (184–228). She finds the Pythagorean writings close to Plutarch's *Advice to a Bride and Groom* (192–197), and notes Seneca's stress

One Roman author seems to have thought considerably about the possibilities offered to marriage in Stoic thought, Seneca. The sources for reconstructing his thought on matrimony are rather complex. Chiara Torre uses *Moral Epistles* 9, 94 and 95, the *Consolation for Helvia*, and Jerome's *Against Jovinian* 47, to do so.⁶³ The last is very complex but seems to contain some Theophrastos and a great deal of Seneca, as heavily filtered and elaborated by Jerome. Most of the passage consists of negative examples for loving women or marrying. Jerome's position is, in general, against marriage and in favor of celibacy. At best this could only represent a part of Seneca, who favored marriage, and treated it as one of the "preferable indifferents."

In Torre's reconstruction, Seneca's concept of marriage is based on *sapientia* (the wisdom of the sage), which possesses in Stoic thought an essential unity. Marriage belongs to what the Stoics defined as "indifferents" but is also "worthy," belonging to the "suitable" (καθήκοντα). Marriage in itself is not important, but it can be considered a springboard to the ultimate goal, virtue. What is important is living marriage well, that is, according to a matrimony based on Stoic principles. The proper marriage must lead to the fullness of *sapientia*. In the perfect marriage a progressive interiorization takes place as the spouses, becoming ever more rational in their conduct, more perfectly adapt themselves to the laws of the *Logos*, the divine rationality inherent in the universe. The married person must struggle continually against being swept up by the futile preoccupations which dominate the lives of most human beings, such as power, honor, and wealth. Among these, too, are marriage and children. All are subject to fortune and not under one's complete control. The true good (*bonum uerum*) cannot even be scratched by fortune and is always in the *sapiens'* power. Seneca would say: "Marrying does not matter; what matters is

on *pudicitia* (218–220, 222–223). On Plutarch's *Advice*, see also Treggiari, 224–226. D. Cohen, "The Augustan Law on Adultery: The Social and Cultural Context," in *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present* (ed. D.I. Kertzer and R.P. Saller: New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1991) 109–126, notes the extreme emphasis on chastity and *pudicitia* in the Augustan legislation. See also B.W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows. The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 2003).

⁶³ C. Torre, *Il matrimonio del Sapiens. Ricerche sul De matrimonio di Seneca* (D.A.R.F.I.C.L. ET, nuova serie 191; Genoa: Pub. del D.A.R.F.I.C.L. ET, 2000). For the text, see, D. Vottero, *Lucio Anneo Seneca. I frammenti* (VII. Il matrimonio) (Bologna 1998) 22–31, 134–167, 237–288; and P. Schaff, H. Wace, et al., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (Second Series) VI. *St. Jerome* (Oxford 1892, reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1983) 379, 386. The kernel of Seneca's contribution seems to be in no. 47, pp. 383–384.

living marriage well." A wife must overcome the limitation of her sex and become a *magnus uir*, a male on a grand scale. Nonetheless, there is a special feminine path to virtue. This consists in modesty and chastity (*pudicitia*), the greatest adornment of a woman and the most important factor in a wife's intellectual progress toward *sapientia*. In this way the marriage becomes transformed from an *officium* (duty) into a true good (*beneficium*). The marriage becomes not just marriage but the performance of the best possible actions, in short, of doing good (*bene facere*).

Torre sees here something very innovative and new in Seneca. Marrying becomes a starting point for perfecting oneself in moral virtue, in which the wife is both an actor and a recipient of her husband's actions. Marriage is not just a question of the husband becoming a *sapiens*, but is the privileged place where the wife, as an active subject, can attain to "wisdom." As so often happens in Seneca's reconstructions of moral virtue, the door is left open to the possibility of the exact opposite happening. In this scenario, a tyrannical marriage can result, a place of mutual prevarication, an aberrant relationship, and a visible sign of two minds enslaved to vice. Instead of being an instrument of her husband's perfection, the wife, perverting her ideal role, becomes an agent of her husband's corruption.⁶⁴ In this perspective, true marriage, like true friendship only belongs to "sages." They alone live matrimony in its fullness. The ideal marriage becomes a part of the sage's journey toward wisdom, the friendship existing among *sapientes*. Without this type of friendship and this journey, no conjugal union can be justified. For Torre, this is Seneca's most profound and original message.⁶⁵

To Torre's recreation of Seneca's thought, one can add some observations. First of all, his concept of marriage is firmly based on Stoic doctrines regarding the constitution of the world and the nature of the divine. It is thus both extremely remote and extremely close to both ideal Graeco-Roman and Christian marriage. It is remote in that the universe itself, or its rationality, is the innate "God" whom one imitates and with whom one comes in contact. Both traditional Graeco-Roman religion and Paul would have an eye on the next life. However, as in Plutarch's formulation and in Paul's, marriage is supposed to serve as a springboard to one's own perfection, in our relationship to the divine and the ultimate goal in life. For both Seneca and Plutarch philosophy, which has heavily

⁶⁴ Torre, *Il matrimonio del Sapiens*, esp. 41, 42, 45, 47–50, 57, 73, 75.

⁶⁵ Torre, *Il matrimonio del Sapiens*, 167.

ethical overtones, is extremely important, not only for the husband but for the wife. Progressive growth in the correct way to live, to be friends, and to love makes a true marriage. In Paul, these concepts give way to the revealed message of the Gospel and of the person of Christ, but there is a fundamental similarity in the thrust of both, in the progression to a more perfect life in accordance with the divine.⁶⁶

Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love* may have been partially influenced by contemporary Roman ideas about marriage. He had lived in Rome and was a close friend of elite Romans in Greece. Moreover, Thespiiai where the dialogue takes place was close to Corinth, a Roman refoundation, and Italian immigrants seem to have moved north from Corinth into Thespiiai. The heroine of the *Dialogue*, Ismenodora, may be modeled after a real person by that name if a conjectured reading of an inscription is correct. She was seemingly a wealthy landowner from an Italian family.⁶⁷ The dialogue genre allowed Plutarch considerable liberty, and he may be teasing the reader or trying out a very problematic proposition, but to some extent the plot, the success of a wealthy older woman in kidnapping and marrying an attractive youth, may reflect realities of his own time.

The marriage situation in the *Dialogue on Love* may reflect more reality than a modern reader might suspect. In her discussion of Roman marriage in Late Antiquity, Kate Cooper tries to dispense with many misunderstandings about it.⁶⁸ She notes that Roman women did not strictly speaking come under the authority of their husbands upon marriage. Legally they remained under their own *familia*. She also claims that there is no substantial evidence before AD 400 that the ideas contained in the "Household Tables" of the New Testament were taken seriously by wives of the upper classes. Instead they inherited strong traditions of personal

⁶⁶ Seneca *De matrimonio*, 71–77. See Torre, *Il matrimonio del Sapiens*, esp., 39–75, 167–168; G. Reydam-Schils, *The Roman Stoics*, 171–175; and I. Ramelli, "Philosophen und Prediger: Dion und Paulus—pagane und christliche weise Männer," in *Dion von Prusa. Der Philosoph und sein Bild* (Sapere 12; ed. H.-G. Nesselrath; Göttingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 183–205, esp., 198–201.

⁶⁷ G. Tsouvala, "Integrating Marriage and *Homonoia*," in *The Unity of Plutarch's Work. "Moralia" Themes in the "Lives," Features of the "Lives" in the "Moralia"* (Millenium-Studien/Millennium Studies 19; ed. A.G. Nikolaidis; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008) 701–718 (706–708), argues that Plutarch's Ismenodora is the same as a real woman (in her reconstruction, replacing the conjectured Ismenodoros with Ismenodora), listed in an inscription for the *collegium* of the upper gymnasium at Thespiiai (IG VII 1777), and probably of mixed Roman and Greek citizenship.

⁶⁸ K. Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), "Roman Marriage in Late Antiquity," 146–160.

honor and obligation to their own blood kin. The wife did not “join” the family of her husband, since “*manus*” marriages had ceased to be the norm after the first century BC. Rather, the wife became a *materfamilias*, as a member of her own father’s *familia*. Since the establishments of *materfamilias* and *paterfamilias* were distinct, the husband did not, for example, control the property of his wife.⁶⁹ In her discussion about the changes that occurred under Christianity, Cooper mentions more misunderstandings. Christian writers began developing an idea of the “marital bond” as a permanent and irreversible union of two individuals. This, according to Cooper, was, first, an idea wholly alien to Roman law. But it was also innovative even from the point of view of a New Testament tradition which saw divorce as undesirable, but deferred to Torah or Roman law where validity was concerned.⁷⁰

As for these thoughts of Graeco-Roman intellectuals on marriage, New Testament scholars can draw their own conclusions. One can consult the vast number of books and articles on Paul and marriage.⁷¹ Indirectly at least, Paul could have been influenced by negative philosophical approaches to *eros*, such as appear in the *On Love* literature.⁷² At the same time, even some of the *On Love* literature may have sought a solution in *philia*. In the Middle Platonic revival of the dialogue form, Plutarch sought to integrate the Platonic quest for Beauty into married life. Here, in his own way, he was following Musonius and Seneca in their integration of

⁶⁹ Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household*, 148–150.

⁷⁰ Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household*, 147, 152–160.

⁷¹ This article does not attempt to address the vast scholarship by Biblical scholars on Paul and marriage. Some bibliography can be found in Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 304. However, pertinent for this study, besides the works mentioned above, are: R.B. Ward, “Musonius and Paul on Marriage,” *NTS* 36 (1990) 281–289; H. Tiedemann, *Die Erfahrung des Fleisches. Paulus und die Last der Lust* (Stuttgart: Radius, 1998) and “Das Gesetz in den Gliedern—Paulus und das sexuelle Begehren,” *ZNT* 2 (1998) 18–28; O.L. Yarbrough, “Paul, Marriage, and Divorce,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook* (ed. J.P. Sampley; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2003) 404–442; B.J. Bauman-Martin, “Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine *Haustafel*,” *JBL* 123 (2004) 253–279; R.M. Thorsteinsson, “Paul and Roman Stoicism: Romans 12 and Contemporary Stoic Ethics,” *JSNT* 29 (2006) 139–161; T. Engberg-Pedersen, “Paul’s Stoicizing Politics in Romans 12–13: The Role of the Argument,” *JSNT* 29 (2006) 163–172; and B.A. Paschke, “Ambiguity in Paul’s References in Greco-Roman Sexual Ethics,” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 83 (2007) 169–192.

⁷² C.A. Evans, “Paul and the Pagans,” in *Paul. Jew, Greek, and Roman* (Pauline Studies 5; ed. S.E. Porter; Boston: Brill, 2008) 117–139, lists 200 parallels with pagan authors, but, as he acknowledges, most of these could be commonplace, and his list includes the Pastoral Epistles. He notes Paul’s use of philosophical vocabulary (129–130). In his list Seneca appear 19 times, Epiktetos 17, and Plutarch 18.

philosophy and *sapientia* into married life and the quest for perfection. He ends the *Erotikos* with two great *exempla* of the “virtue” or courage of heroic women. Both recall aspects of the martyrdom of Christian women, much as in Paul the threat of martyrdom lurks in the background of his Letters. But in general the more humble aspects of moral virtue within marriage and a religious-philosophical ascent toward the Good and Beautiful seem more important.

Paul mentions the struggle against “the flesh” and “lustful desires,” and recommends celibacy. In I Cor 7 the recommendation for celibacy is given as a personal opinion only and appears in only two verses. Moreover, it is recommended in light of the imminent coming of Christ and the end of the world, which impends upon all decisions which are normally made about marriage. The first has to do with remaining in the state one is in, whether celibate or married, “because of the impending necessity” (I Cor 7:25–28).⁷³ This, he says, is a personal opinion, not “an instruction from the Lord.” He also states firmly that if a girl marries, she is doing nothing wrong. He goes on: “... the time we live in is running out ... The world as we know it is passing away” (I Cor 7:29–31). Having a wife or not, being sad or joyful, wealthy or poor pales into insignificance. This eschatological dimension, naturally, has no real parallel in the thinking of Graeco-Roman philosophers. The freedom to devote oneself to religion, though, parallels somewhat the *topos* of whether a philosopher should marry. The fundamental passage in Paul is I Cor 7:32–34, directed both to unmarried men and women. If not married, they will be free to please the Lord, but if married their primary concern will be with their husband or wife, and “with worldly affairs,” rather than with “the things of the Lord” (I Cor 7:33, repeated somewhat in 34).⁷⁴

Arjava does not see much change, however, in Christian times regarding love and subjection from a woman’s standpoint. The real changes, in his view, can be found in frequent reminders to women of the difficulties of married life. Augustine and others, in this assessment, stressed male domination. They also encountered opposition from Christian families,

⁷³ See the discussion in Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 315–320, literally: “in view of the impending crisis” (διὰ τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην). Later he adds: “the (critical) time has been shortened” (ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν, 29), and “the shape of this world is passing away” (παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, 31).

⁷⁴ See Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 319–320.

who objected to celibacy lest they lose an heir.⁷⁵ Paul, in this view, seems to advise marriage for most persons to avoid the occasions of sin.

In Paul's promotion of celibacy, his advice parallels that of Epikouros and other philosophers who in general were against marriage and only seem to have allowed it under special circumstances. Paul never speaks of *eros* explicitly, nor does the word even appear in the New Testament, but the concept is often in the background. Unlike Epikouros, and like Musonius Rufus and most Greek thinkers, Paul would have considered *eros* as part of the divine plan for the preservation of the human race.⁷⁶ For Christian marriage to succeed and supplant non-Christian marriage it had to convey a sense of the sacredness of marriage, perhaps a greater sense of its sacredness, and its integration into the divine economy and the destiny of the spouses and children.⁷⁷ To some extent Paul accomplishes this by comparing the love of a husband for his wife to the love of Christ for His Church:

Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for it . . . (Eph 5:25).

But, besides I Cor 7:16, cited above:

For all you know, wife, you might save your husband; or for all you know, husband, you might save your wife.

We find just before it:

For the unbelieving husband has been made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been made holy through the brother (I Cor 7:14).⁷⁸

There seems to be no passage in Paul that explicitly suggests that a wife might become the superior partner in a marriage through her virtue or religiosity. Still, the two passages, I Cor 7:14 and 16, would seem to imply this possibility, at least from a moral standpoint. One can hardly imagine, also, that some very solemn ceremony for Christian marriage would not have existed almost from the beginning. Later, permission for marriage

⁷⁵ A. Arjava, *Women and Law in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996/1998) 127–130.

⁷⁶ Musonius, *Diatribes* 13B and 14, esp. 14.20.

⁷⁷ For the religious conflict caused by conversion, see Bauman-Martin, "Women on the Edge," esp. 266–267.

⁷⁸ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 299. The *Revised English Bible*: "For the husband now belongs to God through his Christian wife and the wife through her Christian husband."

and the marriage ceremony fell under the jurisdiction of the bishop, thus introducing another element of the sacred into them, and eventually matrimony was considered a sacrament.

For Paul, love, rather than falling under the categories of *eros* and *philia*, finds its consummation in *agape*. This is primarily in the sense of charity, that is, a non-erotic love for others and sacrificing oneself for them as Christ had done. Still, *agape* is something that pertains more to the group, especially the Christian group.⁷⁹ Plutarch at times identifies God with the Form of the Good and Beautiful, or with Being, and thus *eros* in these passages would be ultimately directed toward God. In Paul, too, love is directed toward God, then to one's neighbor. It is also intimately connected with his love of Christ, the driving force in his own life, hopefully to be realized in Paul's Christians. Paul does not state the Platonic parallel expressly of *eros* seeking something divine. Nonetheless, there is a vague reminiscence of the lover and the beloved as it existed in the older erotic literature, and its integration into the Platonic ascent to God. There is also another aspect of the ascent in the parallel between the husband and his wife and Christ and His Church. The love of Christ, though, would come not at the first stage described by Plato, contemplation of the beauty of, say, the beautiful boy, but at a higher stage, where the intellectual and moral excellence of the beloved is contemplated, in a second stage of the ascent.⁸⁰

In conclusion, in spite of great differences, there are many common elements in the Graeco-Roman authors and in Paul. Above all there is the deeply felt religious sense of marriage, and of higher goals that transcend traditional marriage, including the integration of marriage into the ultimate goal of life. In incorporating marriage into Middle Platonism,

⁷⁹ For Graeco-Roman friendship and Christian, see E.D.H. Carmichael, *Friendship. Interpreting Christian Love* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), "From Classical Friendship to New Testament Love," 7–39, esp. 35–39, "Love and Friendship in the Bible." The noun *philia* occurs only once in the New Testament (and in a negative context, "friendship with the world" (φιλία τοῦ κόσμου), though the verb appears 25 times (37). She notes that the distinction between *eros*, *philia*, and *agape* was somewhat weak at the time of the New Testament (35–39).

⁸⁰ Paul speaks rather infrequently of love for God or Christ as related to love and marriage. Pertinent are: I Cor 5, 6, and 7 (on sexual immorality, avoiding temptation through marriage, and celibacy as in itself preferable); I Cor 12:27, our bodies belonging to the body of Christ; I Cor 13:13, *agape* as the highest of gifts; Eph 3:17–19, on the depth of Christ's love; Eph 5:1–2 and 22–33, on loving one's wife, loving others as Christ has loved us; Phil 1:21, Paul's life as united to Christ's and his desire to depart and be with Christ; Phil 2:1–4, on the consolation of Christ's love; and Phil 3:7–8 on Paul's great love for Christ.

Plutarch moved away somewhat from the traditional goal of procreation and its role in the continued existence of the *polis*, but also away from mere companionate marriage. Here we see a split arising between traditional religion and religious Platonism. In Paul's case marriage could no longer be based on the religious traditions of his upbringing. Nor could it easily be incorporated into the Graeco-Roman religious world. In this respect, both Graeco-Roman philosophers and Paul were stepping out on new paths.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA ON WOMAN AND MARRIAGE IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT HOUSEHOLD CODES

Gretchen J. Reydam-Schils

We ought, I think, by having these divine writings stamped deeply into the soul, to regard wisdom as a noble starting-point, to whatever lot in life men turn, and to believe that the same wisdom is a calm haven of salvation. For it is because of wisdom that they whose course has led them to the Father are good fathers of their children; that they who have come to know the Son are good sons to their parents; that they who have been mindful of the Bridegroom are good husbands of their wives; that they who have been ransomed from the deepest slavery are good masters to their servants.¹

As Clement indicates in this key passage, virtues such as righteousness, reverence, gentleness are the divine writings stamped in the human soul that takes wisdom as a starting point and turns to God. Such a human being performs all his social duties correctly because he is anchored in the divine in its different manifestations as Father, Son, and Bridegroom, or because of the good that he has received himself in being freed from slavery. Social duties and the marital relationship in particular, will be the focus of this paper.

Clement's list of social duties constitutes a common schema in antiquity and early Christianity that analyzes a household as primarily consisting of the relationships between parents and children, between husbands and wives and between masters and slaves. This schema allows one to compare non-Christian writings on household management, the so-called *oikonomikos* treatises, with the passages in the Christian Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Letters that are known as the household codes (*Haustafeln*).²

¹ Clement *Protrepticus* 107.2–3, trans. Butterworth. Greek text: Ταύτας, οἶμαι, τὰς θείας γραφὰς ἔναποσφραγισμένους χρῆν τῇ ψυχῇ καλὸν ἀφετήριον σοφίαν ἡγείσθαι τοῖς ἐφ' ὅτι οὖν τοῦ βίου τραπέισι μέρος, ὅρμον τε τὴν αὐτὴν ἀκύμονα σωτηρίας σοφίαν νομίζειν· δι' ἣν ἀγαθοὶ μὲν πατέρες τέκνων οἱ τῷ πατρὶ προσδεδραμηκότες, ἀγαθοὶ δὲ γονεῦσιν υἱοὶ οἱ τὸν υἱὸν νενοηκότες, ἀγαθοὶ δὲ ἄνδρες γυναικῶν οἱ μεμνημένοι τοῦ νυμφίου, ἀγαθοὶ δὲ οἰκετῶν δεσπότες οἱ τῆς ἐσχάτης δουλείας λελυτρωμένοι.

² Eph 5:21–6:9; Col 3:18–4:1; Titus 2:1–10; 1 Peter 2:17–3:9; 1 Tim 2:8–15; 6:1–2. In addition, see also the letters of Polycarp, Ignatius (as in *Phila.* 4, longer recension), and Clement of Rome. For a good overview of the *oikonomikos* tradition, cf. C. Natali, "Oikonomia in Hellenistic Political Thought," in *Justice and Generosity... Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium Hellenisticum*, eds. A. Laks and M. Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge

In addition, the ancient philosophical accounts on household management, by Aristotle, Xenophon and Plutarch, among others, overlap with a philosophical tradition of giving precepts for concrete social situations, with a kind of “how to behave towards” manuals. Thus Stobaeus, for instance, preserved a number of fragments by the Stoic Hierocles (fl. 100 CE) that prescribe the correct attitude one should have towards the gods, one’s fatherland, spouse, parents, children, siblings, and other relatives;³ Stobaeus himself, in his anthology (IV Hense), used those topics as structuring devices.⁴

But there was no consensus on the value of giving precepts. Seneca, for instance, in his *Letters* 94–95 recorded a famous debate within Stoicism on the usefulness of such precepts. Seneca himself favors a combination of general principles derived from doctrine with precepts for specific situations. The Stoic Aristo, on the other hand, allegedly considered precepts superfluous, because if one knows the general principles, one can derive from these what one has to do in each concrete situation. Clement’s *Protrepticus* echoes this debate when he rejects the need to delve into detailed questions as to whether one should marry, participate in politics, or have children—questions addressed by the Stoics⁵—and claims that all one needs is the reverence for God and the universal prescriptions of religion (*Protr.* 113.1). In the earlier-cited passage, Clement, in the context of proving the superiority of Christian faith, similarly holds that the turn

University Press, 1995) 95–128. On the connections between the household codes and the non-Christian philosophical tradition, D.L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981); E. Pagels, “Adam and Eve, Christ and the Church: A Survey of Second-Century Controversies Concerning Marriage,” in *The New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McL. Wilson*, eds. A.H.B. Logan and A.J.M. Wedderburn (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983) 146–175; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, “Christian Mission and the Patriarchal Order of the Household,” *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 251–284. This is not to say that the non-Christian philosophical tradition by itself fully explains, or completely overlaps with the household codes. Given the extent of the secondary literature on the household codes, in the subsequent notes I will refer only to the works of immediate relevance to my arguments here, and leave aside parallels in the Jewish tradition and Philo of Alexandria’s work.

³ Cf. H. von Arnim, *Hierokles, Ethische Elementarlehre (Papyrus 9780), nebst den bei Stobäus erhaltenen ethischen Exzerpten aus Hierokles* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1906); M. Isnardi Parente, “Ierocle Stoico. Oikeiosis e doveri sociali,” in *ANRW* II.36.3 (1989) 2201–2226; T. Bénatouil, *Faire usage: la pratique du stoïcisme* (Paris: Vrin, 2006) 270–278.

⁴ On Stobaeus’ headings, cf. D. Searby, “The Intertitles in Stobaeus: Condensing Culture,” in *Thinking Through Excerpts: Studies on Stobaeus*, ed. G.J. Reydams-Schils (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011) 23–70.

⁵ As in Cicero *De Finibus* 3.68; Diogenes Laertius 7.121.

towards God in itself will order one's social relationships and duties. Yet in spite of his reservations about precepts in this specific context, Clement himself does not refrain from giving very detailed instructions in the second and third book of his *Paedagogus*, on all kinds of topics, covering food and drink, furnishings, sexuality, jewelry, cosmetics, laughter, public baths, etc.

Any analysis of how the ancient philosophical and early Christian expositions on household management and precepts viewed the marital relationship hinges on two interrelated issues. As the context of the household codes also makes clear, claims about the correct rapport between husband and wife rely on assessments of both the status of women in comparison with men, and the value of marriage in comparison with virginity and celibacy.⁶ Consequently, the first point which this paper establishes is that in Clement's case also the one topic cannot be meaningfully addressed independently of the other. Section one of this essay focuses on how Clement values women, both inside and outside marriage. Section two analyzes how this view of women affects Clement's weighing of the benefits and limitations of the marital relationship, as well as his handling of the tensions in the Pauline texts on this topic. Such an approach requires that one take the entire range of Clement's writings into account.

The second purpose of this paper, intertwined with the first, is to reassess the exact nature and extent of the influence of the 1st cent. CE Stoic, Musonius Rufus, on Clement. Musonius Rufus also explicitly connects the themes of the status of women and the value of marriage, and similar views are also attested for Antipater of Tarsus (2nd cent. BCE) and Hierocles, already mentioned above.⁷ Yet in spite of the undeniable influence of Musonius Rufus on other aspects of Clement's exposition,⁸ when it comes to the topic of marriage and the role of women, Clement

⁶ This paper also draws on G.J. Reydam-Schils, "Musonius Rufus, Porphyry, and Christians in Counter-Point on Marriage and the Good," in *Being or Good? Metamorphoses of Neoplatonism*, ed. A. Kijewska (Lublin: Catholic University of Lublin, KUL, 2004) 153–168, and my "Musonius Rufus" entry in *Realencyclopädie für Antike und Christentum*, forthcoming.

⁷ G.J. Reydam-Schils, *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2005) 147–159; for Hierocles cf. Stobaeus 4.502–507 Hense; for Antipater cf. *SVF* 3.62–63.

⁸ A.C. van Geytenbeek, *Musonius Rufus and Greek Diatribe* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1963); C.P. Parker, "Musonius in Clement," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 12 (1901) 97–114; P. Wendland, *Quaestiones Musonianae, de Musonius Stoico Clementis Alexandrini aliorumque auctore* (Berlin: Mayer & Mueller, 1886).

for the most part does not follow the groundbreaking innovations of the Stoics. Instead he turns to the worldview of the household codes and of the Deutero-Pauline and the Pastoral Letters, which is much closer to Neo-Pythagorean accounts of household management than to the late Stoic ones.

The third goal of this paper, then, is to examine in section three the possible connections between Clement's views and Neo-Pythagorean accounts, and with these also to assess which features of Platonism he adopted in his treatment of these questions. As we will see, Clement's endorsement of the relatively positive view of marriage in the Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Letters contributes to a tempered Platonism

1

The most important clusters of citations and claims for an analysis of the status of women and the value of marriage occur in books 3 and 4 of Clement's *Stromateis*. Although the connection between these two books is not obvious, given that book 3 focuses on marriage and book 4 on martyrdom, various sub-themes clearly do connect the two expositions. Both books reject two extremes to be avoided. In book 3, Clement claims that marriage is undermined both by (1) those who engage in indiscriminate promiscuity because they consider themselves already beyond the ordinary human condition of the distinction between good and evil, as well as the laws and (2) by those who reject the embodied condition altogether as a form of contamination and recommend total abstention (cf. *Strom.* 3.40.1 for a summary statement). In book 4, Clement is critical of both (1) those who reject martyrdom as a form of illegitimate suicide, and (2) those who are all too eager to pursue it out of rejection of the body (4.16–17). According to Clement, those who reject marriage because they consider only total abstention acceptable and those who embrace martyrdom for the wrong reasons share a misguided contempt of the body and the created order, and thus a fundamental ingratitude towards God.⁹ Hence Clement continues to develop his moderate view of the body and

⁹ Cf. W. Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 57 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952) 195–219, and D.G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 105–113.

the natural order across both books, a theme to which we'll return in section three and that is also indicative of a nuanced Platonism.

The status of women, essential to Clement's treatment of marriage in book 3, also figures in his discussion of martyrdom in book 4. Martyrdom is a form of heroic perfection, and Clement argues that women as well as men can embody this heroic attitude.¹⁰ In an allusion to passages from Paul's letters in which Paul claims that in Christ the usual social distinctions are transcended (Gal 3:28, cf. also Col 3:11), Clement opens his fourth book with the statement that martyrdom and human perfection are accessible to all: both slaves and free persons, and men and women have to engage in philosophy, that is, the striving towards the life of wisdom in Clement's plenary sense of turning towards the Christian God (cf. also 4.58.3; 65.4, 68).

So how do these connections between the two books of the *Stomateis* affect Clement's overall estimation of women? The core text is from chapter 8 of book 4, sections 59–65, which develop the point that human perfection is accessible to all. Yet, without signaling any potential tensions, in section 63.5–65, which concludes his argument on women's potential for virtue, Clement aligns Paul's claims in his first letter to the Corinthians with the letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians.

- (1) 1 Cor 11:3–7 states that just as Christ should be the head of every man, every man should be the head of the woman, and anchors the authority of the husband in the claim that men are made in the image and glory of God (already anticipated and cited in 60.2; cf. also *Paed.* 3.63.2).
- (2) Eph 5:21–25 establishes that a woman stands in a hierarchical relationship to her husband, as the Church stands to Christ. Husbands are enjoined to love their wives as their own bodies (cf. also *Paed.* 3.94.5; *Strom.* 3.84.2; for the entire section of Eph 5:22–6.9, cf. *Paed.* 3.94.5–95.1).
- (3) Col 3:18–4:1 opens up the theme of the submission of wives to include the other social relationships covered in the household codes, those between parents and children and between masters and slaves, both treated from the point of view of both parties. This broader perspective

¹⁰ Bauman-Martin draws a parallel between Christian women in martyrdom and their endurance of submission to non-Christian husbands in 1 Peter 3:1–2, 6, cf. "Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine *Haustafel*," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123.2 (2004) 272–277; on this topic cf. also Clement *Paed.* 3.57, 66, with quotations from 1 Tim 2:9; 1 Peter 3:1–4; cf. also *Stomateis* 7.63–64, discussed below.

leads Clement to his concluding reaffirmation, which picks up both the opening of the book as well as the remark introducing this section (4.58.3), that in Christ all social distinctions are overcome (cf. also 68).

This sequence of texts is complemented by two other key references within book 4 of Clement's *Stromateis*. The first is embedded in a long extract from the first letter of Clement of Rome (105–119, which also gives us a glimpse of Clement of Alexandria's citation method: he tends to reuse the clusters of examples cited by Clement of Rome throughout his work¹¹). Husbands are exhorted to direct their wives to the straight path of goodness, and towards chastity, meekness, silence, and a holy love of all believers¹²; fathers should educate their children in Christ. The second passage, from the letter to Titus (2:3–5; *Strom.* 4.128), occurs in a chapter that discusses the perfect wife's relationship with her husband; here Clement quotes the injunctions for the behavior of older women who should be role models for younger ones, and teach them the proper mode of comportment as mothers and wives, in submission to their husbands.

It is striking that in book 4 of his *Stromateis* Clement does not signal any tension between his use of passages that enjoin wives to be submissive to their husbands and the excerpts from the letter of Clement of Rome and Titus, on the one hand, and his endorsement of the views that perfection is accessible to all human beings and that all social distinctions are left behind in Christ, on the other. If we place the citations from the household codes in book 4 of the *Stromateis* in the larger context of Clement's other writings, which picture of the status of women emerges? The first book of the *Paedagogus* certainly opens with a very positive statement (1.10–11; cf. also 3.39), that the *Logos* is the teacher of men and women alike. Here Clement emphasizes what men and women have in common: they are both measured by the standard of one and the same virtue and one way of life, one church, the same kind of temperance, and of modesty; they share nourishment, and the conjugal bond; everything is the same: respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love. Given that they hold life in common, they also share grace and salvation.

¹¹ Cf. the edition with translation and notes by A. van den Hoek (*Sources Chrétiennes* 463), 230 n.1.

¹² Something appears to have gone wrong here with the French translation in *Sources Chrétiennes*: of the four injunctions for the correct behavior of women, only two appear in the translation, the one concerning meekness, and the one concerning love (*agapé*).

And just as the term human being applies to both, so they are both called lambs in relation to the Shepherd.

The list of common features seems not to follow any particular ordering principle, yet it still bears traces of a standard schema. If one takes Musonius Rufus as a basis of comparison (3 and 4 Lutz/Hense), one can discern in Clement's list (1) features pertaining to the body, (2) cognitive functions, from sense-perception to reason, but with crucial Christian modifications and additional functions, including *gnôsis* (knowledge, but in Clement's specific sense, related to faith), *elpis* (hope), *hupakoê* (obedience), and *agapê* (love), and (3) specific virtues, here with the emphasis on *sôphrosunê* and *aidôs*.

But here too Clement has combined the question whether there is one type of virtue for both men and women with a *topos* from the literature on household management and marriage, namely, what it is husbands and wives hold in common. Whereas previous accounts tended to focus on the practical side of the marital relationship in the sharing of possessions, relations, bodies, and children, Musonius Rufus (13A Lutz/Hense) expands the *koinônia biou* (the sharing of life) to include a union of souls and to encompass a deep, mutual affection.¹³ In Clement's transformation of the stock theme, spouses also share what matters to a Christian: grace and salvation.

And yet, already in this context Clement adds a crucial nuance to this positive assessment of women (1.10.3): the bond of marriage does not carry over into the afterlife, and neither does the distinction between men and women. Clement glosses the latter point elsewhere, in a curious paradox (*Strom.* 6.100) not uncommon in antiquity. When it comes to souls, the distinction between male and female does not hold, or to be more precise, Clement claims that they are *neither* male *nor* female. Yet, in the highest stage beyond this life, he goes on to say, a woman is transformed into a man, so to speak, losing her femininity, and acquiring on an equal footing virility and perfection. And thus it is not the human being as such that is the standard, but the male. (This is all the more striking given that Clement does not hesitate to attribute feminine traits to God and Christ, as in *Div* 37.2; *Strom.* 5.81.3; *Paed.* 1.39, 41–42, 46.)

¹³ Reydam-Schils, *The Roman Stoics*, 153. On this topic, cf. also E. Gritti, "La legittimità filosofica e giuridica del matrimonio gli Stoici, Plutarco e i Christiani," in *Il matrimonio dei Cristiani: esegesi biblica e diritto Romano* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2009) 595–615.

Book 4 of the *Stromateis* reinforces the point that both sexes are capable of perfection (*Strom.* 4.118–124, 129). One and the same perfection applies to both, but perfection can manifest itself differently according to the practice of different virtues (*Strom.* 4.130). (Chapter 19 of book 4 concludes a long citation from Clement of Rome, 105–119, and from section 120 onwards contains material on the perfection of women which has been culled from elsewhere; chapter 20 treats the topic of perfection in marriage; it includes the reference to Titus 2:3–5)

Yet the core text that forms the starting point of this section (*Strom.* 4.58–65), mentioned above, also considerably expands on the reservations already noted.¹⁴ Clement repeats the claim from his *Paedagogus* (1.10–11) that men and women are equal as far as their souls are concerned, and to that extent they have the same nature and the same virtue. But in this life women are different from men in their bodies, and hence pregnancy and the care of the household fall to them, whereas agricultural labor, under the right circumstances, would be appropriate for men (cf. also *Paed.* 3.49.2–50.3, on the theme of “working with one’s own hands,” or *autourgia*).

Here too a comparison with Musonius Rufus’ views serves to highlight further the distinctive features of Clement’s perspective. Unlike Clement, Musonius adopts another common strand in the thinking about the body in antiquity: that men’s and women’s bodies are the same in the sense that they are structurally analogous (3 Lutz/Hense). Moreover, Musonius adopts a much more nuanced stance on the traditional division of labor, allowing for exceptions, and suggesting that all human tasks constitute a *common* obligation (4 Lutz/Hense).

Another significant difference between Musonius Rufus and Clement is their sequence of the traditional four cardinal virtues: wisdom, temperance, justice, and courage. When Clement discusses women, he starts with, and devotes the most attention to, the virtue of temperance (*sôphrosunê*), whereas Musonius Rufus starts with *phronêsis* as the virtue of reason (3, 4 Lutz/Hense). Clement mentions the virtue of reason last, and in the vague guise of “philosophy” (*Strom.* 4.62.4), adding the Platonic rather than Stoic point that men, unless they have become effeminate, are superior and hold the first rank in *everything*. Whereas Plato in his *Republic* repeatedly emphasizes this last point, of women’s *general* inferiority *vis-à-vis* men

¹⁴ A. van den Hoek, “Clement of Alexandria on Martyrdom,” *Studia Patristica* 26 (1993) 335–339.

(455C; 455D–E; 456A; 457A), Musonius Rufus allows only for a difference in physical strength (4 Lutz/Hense). Unlike Musonius Rufus, Clement rejects the paradigm of the Amazons, explaining that all Christians, men and women, are supposed to be pacifists, but he does go on to mention other warrior-women, women who share in the hard labor of their husbands, and the paradigm of male and female dogs.¹⁵ His preferred epithet for a good woman and good marriage is “temperate” (*sôphrôn*).

“Temperance” is crucial for Clement because of the emphasis in his moral outlook on “self-control” (*enkrateia*, cf. *Strom.* 2.105.1; 3.4; cf. also Titus 2:2, 4–6, 12); self-control and temperance cover all aspects of life, and not just sexuality. At times temperance is ranked so high as to be connected directly with the contemplative life and the striving towards assimilation with God (*Strom.* 4.152.3). But elsewhere Clement leaves no doubt that temperance ranks lower than the virtue of reason (*Strom.* 6.125; cf. also 2.79.5), here represented as the pair *phronêsis-gnôsis*: temperance is only an imperfect and mortal form of *phronêsis* for those who have not yet reached sagehood. The human being who has reached perfection, on the other hand, or the “gnostic” in Clement’s sense *qua* gnostic, is above self-control, with *apatheia* ranking higher than *enkrateia* (*Strom.* 4.138; cf. 4.40; cf. also *Strom.* 3.57, in which Clement distinguishes between an ordinary and higher understanding of *enkrateia*); the gnostic rises above the virtues of courage and temperance (*Strom.* 6.76; cf. also 2.81). At this level the human being has progressed so much into the noetic realm and beyond the ordinary human condition that the distinction between male and female no longer applies, as noted above, because the gnostic has become like an angel (*isangelos* 6.105; see also 7 *passim*).

The insertion of the three Pauline texts listed above in his discussion of the virtue of men and women (*Strom.* 4.63.5–65; 1 Cor 11:3—quoted twice, already anticipated in 60.2—; Eph 5:21–25; Col 3:18–4.1) leaves no doubt whatsoever that for Clement wives should be submissive to their husbands.¹⁶ Clement does not consider marriage primarily as a reciprocal

¹⁵ For the best analysis of how these themes overlap with Plato’s treatment of the same topic in his *Republic*, cf. M. Nussbaum, “The Incomplete Feminism of Musonius Rufus, Platonist, Stoic, and Roman,” in *The Sleep of Reason. Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. M. Nussbaum and J. Sihvola (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 283–326; cf. also “Musonius Rufus: Enemy of Double Standards for Men and Women?” In *Double Standards in the Ancient and the Medieval World*, ed. K. Pollmann (Göttingen: Duehrkohp & Radicke, 2000) 221–46.

¹⁶ Add to these references also *Paed.* 2.71.1, according to which the husband is the crown of the wife, marriage the crown of the husband, and their children the flowers.

relationship between equals. He systematically describes the wife, in line with his interpretation of the creation of Eve, as the helpmate of the husband (*boêthos*, as in *Paed.* 3.8; 3.19; *Strom.* 4.20); she takes care of him by running the household and looking after his needs (*Paed.* 3.41, 49; *Strom.* 2.140; 3.82; 18.108). He mentions only in passing the possibility of reciprocal aid (as in *Strom.* 3.97, an allusion to 1 Cor 7:3–5, and in *Strom.* 3.79). With Musonius Rufus the balance is the exact reverse: whereas he also valorizes the supportive role of wives and mothers, and transforms the traditional theme of men's control, he emphasizes the reciprocal and symmetrical aspects of the marital relationship (13A-B, 14 Lutz/Hense).

Finally, whereas Clement's injunctions in *Paedagogus* apply to both men and women, and he, like Musonius Rufus, rejects double standards in chastity (as in *Paed.* 2.89–90; cf. Musonius Rufus 12 Lutz/Hense), he also clearly states in the *Paedagogus* that women, like adolescents, are more prone to immoderate behavior than men. This point of view explains why Clement puts so much stock in temperance (*sôphrosunê*) when he discusses women's potential for virtue. Thus, for instance, he singles out women for extra advice concerning drinking (*Paed.* 2.33.1), chastity (2.114), luxurious living, and licentiousness (as in *Paed.* 3.64ff.); women easily incline towards evil (*Paed.* 2.116–29), laughter is especially dangerous for adolescents and women (*Paed.* 2.47), one has to take special action to protect the chastity of women (*Paed.* 3.58.1), etc. From this perspective too, then, women constitute the weaker sex.¹⁷

2

On the issue of the status of women *vis-à-vis* men, Clement has already shown that he moves within the world of the Pauline and Pastoral Letters. These accounts also display a relatively positive attitude towards marriage and the traditional web of social relationships. With his endorsement of the recommendation that one ought to select bishops among men who have proven themselves capable in the management of their households (*Strom.* 3.79.6, 108), Clement indicates his approval of this position on

¹⁷ These aspects of Clement, as well as his attitude towards sexuality, are highlighted in K. Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003) 247–272, which, however, is highly one-sided and lacks nuance in its negative assessment.

marriage as well (cf. 1 Tim 3:4ff. for this specific injunction).¹⁸ In book 3 of his *Stromateis*, as indicated above, he protects marriage from two different groups of detractors, those who engage in indiscriminate promiscuity, on the one hand, and those who condemn the body and marriage altogether and for the wrong reasons, on the other. For Clement, by contrast, the body is sanctified in a chaste marriage, in which sexuality exclusively serves the goal of procreation (as in *Strom.* 3.46; 47.1). Like Musonius Rufus (15 Lutz/Hense), he too therefore, condemns the exposing of newborns (*Paed.* 2.93).¹⁹ The expectation of chastity holds for both men and women, as we have seen, and the proper basis for a marriage is virtue, not rank or wealth (*Strom.* 4.20; cf. also Musonius Rufus, 13B Lutz/Hense).

This positive valorization of marriage shapes Clement's interpretation of other Scripture passages, and notably 1 Cor 7, which notoriously is much more ambivalent on the issue.²⁰ Clement applies the passage that came to be condensed, rightly or wrongly, as a "marry if you must or can't help it" stance (1 Cor 7:9) to *second* marriages (as in 1 Cor 7:27, 39), and not to marriages altogether, even though the passage right before it (1 Cor 7:8) is addressed to *both* the unmarried and the widowed (cf. *Strom.* 3.4; 82.4; cf. also 97.1).

More striking is perhaps Clement's view that in marriage one serves *both* one's spouse and God (*Paed.* 2.109; *Strom.* 3.88.1; 7.63–64). The most one could say, then, is that the attention of a married person can be divided. But the first letter to the Corinthians raises a much stronger concern, namely that the care for a spouse will get *in the way of* the turn to God (1 Cor 7:32–34), in other words, that one will care about one's spouse and

¹⁸ The standard work on Clement's treatment of marriage is J.-P. Broudéhoux, *Mariage et famille chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1970). For the broader background, the following are particularly useful for my present purpose: D. Hunter, *Marriage in the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); J. Grubbs, "'Pagan' and 'Christian' Marriage: The State of the Question," *Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994) 361–412. reprinted in J. Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity: The Emperor Constantine's Marriage Legislation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); P. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); and Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*.

¹⁹ On this parallel and its broader context, cf. especially I. Ramelli, "Il matrimonio Cristiano in Clemente: un confronto con la legislazione Romana e gli Stoici Romani," *Il matrimonio dei Cristiani: esegesi biblica e diritto Romano* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2009) 351–371.

²⁰ For a good overview of the issues against the background of a Stoic-Cynic debate on marriage, cf. W. Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy. The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7*, SNTSMS, 83 (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

earthly matters *rather than* about God. A passage in the second book of the *Paedagogus* (109) posits that it is only the wife who abandons chastity and devotes too much attention to her looks who belongs completely to marriage as opposed to the relation with God, i.e. to marriage conceived as passion. The chaste spouse, on the other hand, honors God *through* her devotion to her husband.²¹

The third book of the *Stromateis* (3.88) reads like an explicit refutation of too strong a reading of Paul's letter.²² Would it not be possible, Clement asks, for a husband to please his wife and to show gratitude to God? Can a husband not serve God *together* with his spouse? A wife, for her part, is sanctified in the Lord and serves him just as an unmarried woman is and does. And again Clement redirects potential concerns about marriage and Paul's severity toward a *second* union.

A passage in the seventh book of the *Stromateis* (63–64) confirms that this perspective is a leitmotiv for Clement, which he does not merely adopt in the context of treatments explicitly devoted to marriage. Here Clement depicts a moral exemplum, not attested elsewhere, of Peter consoling and encouraging his spouse (on the theme of the apostle's wives and children, see below) when she is facing her martyrdom, as a model of marriage of the blessed. When Paul enjoins that one married should behave as if he or she were not (1 Cor 7:29), Clement again “translates” this as meaning that a marriage should not be prone to passion and not stand in the way of the Lord. By encouraging his wife's martyrdom, Peter behaves as a *true* husband (ὁ τῷ ὄντι ἀνὴρ).

This last passage is similar to depictions of heroic Stoic wives and mothers. At Seneca's moment of suicide (under threats of Nero, to be exact), Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.60–64), for instance, shows us Seneca's wife Paulina in a heroic resolve to die together with her husband, and Seneca as consoling and encouraging Paulina, as well as admiring her moral strength (63). (In this context one also finds admiration expressed for widows who decide not to remarry after the deaths of their husbands, a so-called *univira*).²³

Before we turn our attention to a more systematic overview of how Clement values marriage, one more subtle reconfiguration of a Scripture passage is worth addressing. Whereas the first letter to Timothy (2:13–15) holds that a woman will be saved by procreation, saved, that is, from the

²¹ Cf. H.-I. Marrou in the *Sources Chrétiennes* 108 edition, p. 208 n. 5.

²² On this point, cf. also M. Mees, “Clemens von Alexandrien über Ehe und Familie,” *Augustinianum* 17 (1977) 125.

²³ Cf. Seneca *De matrimonio* 71–77 Haase; Reydams-Schils, *The Roman Stoics*, 171–175.

sin bestowed through Eve as the one who deceived Adam, Clement applies that stance to men (*Strom.* 3.90.1). In this context he leaves aside the reference to Eve and reinforces the point that, as the colloquial expression goes, husband and wife are in it together.

As mentioned already above, Clement defends the notion of a chaste marriage in which sexuality exclusively serves the goal of procreation (*Paed.* 2.10). This stance implies that he holds the sexual dimension of desire within human relationships in very low esteem. Desire as *epithumia* turns marriage into a passionate state, to be avoided at all cost, so that a husband should not even desire his own wife (*Strom.* 3.58.2—a wife's desire is not in the picture; cf. also *Paed.* 2.97.2; 99.3). This view also implies that a considerable risk factor of marriage is the fueling of pleasure and *epithumia* (*Strom.* 2. 137.1 and the entire ch. 23). Given, then, the problematic nature of “*epithumia*-desire,” Clement proposes a different motivational drive instead, one that is perfectly compatible with rationality, namely, *orexis* (*Strom.* 3.71.4), which he also calls a “natural desire” (*Strom.* 3.71; 82.1; cf. also *Paed.* 1.101.1; *Strom.* 2.119.3; *Strom.* 4.116–117.5).²⁴ Marriage itself, properly understood, is ranked among the natural needs, together with hunger and thirst, which can lead to excesses as well, if not controlled properly (*Strom.* 2.118.7; 7.70.6). (Sexual pleasure, on the other hand—τὰ ἀφροδίσια—ranks among the natural but not necessary things, *Strom.* 3.3.2.) Such natural goods are not to be rejected, in other words, but are to be used moderately, without attachment (*Strom.* 4.94). Yet, Clement does not limit himself to this negative and highly restrictive perspective: ultimately the Christian's proper attitude towards the created order is to use everything that has been given, including the body in marriage, with gratitude towards God (*Strom.* 3.85.1).

In keeping with this realization, Clement is at his most positive about marriage when he describes how husband and wife can serve God together (*Strom.* 3.68; 12.79). Thus he applies Christ's dictum “where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in their midst” (Matt 18:20) to the union of husband, spouse, and child. God is equally present with

²⁴ Cf. D. Hunter, “The Language of Desire: Clement of Alexandria's Transformation of Ascetic Discourse,” in *Discursive Formations, Ascetic Piety, and the Interpretations of Early Christian Literature*, ed. V. Wimbush (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1992) 95–111; H. Hägg, “Continence and Marriage: The Concept of *Enkrateia* in Clement of Alexandria,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 81 (2006) 126–143. Both Hunter and Hägg discuss a third term, which tends to be neutral: *hormê*-impulse. These distinctions carry strong Stoic overtones.

those who have a chaste marriage (σωφρόνως) in function of procreation as with those who abstain from corporeal relations *wisely* (λογικῶς, that is, without a rejection of the created order; *Strom.* 3.68). Both marriage and abstention come with their own duties and efforts. A wife assists her husband not only in matters pertaining to the household, but also in faith (*Strom.* 3.108.1). Hence it should come as no surprise that Clement presents the apostles as endorsing both marriage and abstention, each with its own value (*Strom.* 3.86.1), referring to “all the letters” of the apostles, which include the Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Letters.

But Clement goes even a step further than presenting the apostles as endorsing marriage and draws on depictions of the apostles as being married and having children themselves. We already discussed above how Peter is said to have encouraged his spouse at the moment of her martyrdom, and Clement also mentions Peter’s children (*Strom.* 3.52.5), as well as Philippos, who gave his daughters in marriage (i.e., he continued to believe in the value of marriage and procreation for his own descendants). And so Clement presents even the apostle Paul with a wife (*Strom.* 3.53; 4.97), interpreting the word σύζυγε (Phil 4:3) as spouse, rather than companion. Yet in the notion of Paul’s “wife” we also reach the limits of Clement’s positive valorization of marriage. In order not to be hindered in his duties, Paul did not take his wife along with him on his journeys (*Strom.* 3.53) and thus he did consider marriage an obstacle to some extent. Other apostles who did take their wives along, took them along as “sisters” rather than spouses, so that they could also reach women in their quarters without creating scandal.

Just as a woman, in the passage discussed above, leaves behind her womanhood and becomes a man when she reaches perfection, so Clement also claims in the same context (*Strom.* 6.100) that once a woman is past her childbearing years, she is no longer like a spouse towards her former husband, but like a sister, born of the same father. She will be reminded of her companion as her husband only when she looks at the children they had together, but this vestige of their former relationship will disappear altogether once they leave behind the body. Marital love is subsumed under and ultimately dissolves into Christian love (*agapê*; *Strom.* 3.58.2)—which does not constitute an exclusive, one-on-one relationship at all (cf., for instance, *Paed.* 7.53; 12.53; *Strom.* 2.41–42; 87.2). One could compare this stance with Plato’s claim that in the *kallipolis* all men and women of the same generation call each other sisters and brothers (*Rep.* 461D; cf. also *Strom.* 5.98.1, with an explicit reference to Plato’s *Republic*).

Here the contrast between Clement's Christian view and the Roman Stoic tradition is again striking, as two examples will serve to prove. Like Clement, Musonius Rufus wants to limit sexual activity to procreation (12 Lutz/Hense), but unlike him he does not limit the value of marriage to procreation. Musonius Rufus explicitly and strikingly claims that procreation is not sufficient for marriage, in the sense that offspring can also result from any sexual union, and that the primary condition of the marital relationship is the bond of *mutual* care and affection (13A Lutz/Hense), in health, sickness, and under all circumstances. "Where, then, this love for each other is perfect and the two share it completely, each striving to outdo the other in devotion, the marriage is ideal and worthy of envy, for such a union is beautiful" (trans. Lutz).

The second example comes from the Stoic Hierocles (fl. ca. 100 CE), and his famous image of concentric circles (Stobaeus 4.671.7–673.11 Hense). At the center is an individual's mind, and this mind is surrounded by ever widening circles from one's own body, over one's immediate family ultimately to the widest of them all, universal humanity. Hierocles enjoins us to draw the wider circles ever closer to the narrower ones and to the center, so that we are ultimately capable of caring about all human beings to the same extent as we care about ourselves and the people that are closest to us. But even though, in a clear echo of Plato, Hierocles enjoins us to call cousins "brothers" and uncles and aunts "fathers and mothers" (Stobaeus 4.673.2–7), the crucial difference is that he does not require us to bypass or leave behind close relationships in order to reach this goal. The way to universal humanity runs *through* such relationships, and does not annul them.

This same reasoning is also behind Musonius Rufus' claim, already anticipated by Aristotle (*Pol.* 1.2; *EN* 1162a16–31) but extended, that by rejecting marriage, one destroys the home, the city, and the entire human race (14 Lutz/Hense). Clement endorses this view (*Strom.* 2.140.1) when he claims that one ought to marry for the sake of the fatherland and the succession of children, as the completion of the universe, to the extent that it is our responsibility. But in the overall context of his *Stromateis* Clement leaves no doubt that his God ranks higher even than the universe. When Christ commands one to hate one's father, mother, wife, and children (Luke 14:26), Clement suggests (*Strom.* 3.97) that we not interpret this literally, but as an injunction not to get entangled too much in civic *mores* (τοῖς πολιτικοῖς ἔθεσι) so as to want to please the world (*kosmos*) rather than God (1 Cor 7:9). The play on *kosmos* in Paul's wording, which can

mean both “the world” as in “worldly affairs” and “the ordered universe,” can also serve as a subtle critique of the Stoic view of the universe, given that elsewhere too Clement accuses them of having mistaken nature for God, in their call “to live according to nature” (*Strom.* 2.101.1).

Clement’s deeply rooted ambivalence towards women and the marital relationship comes out very clearly in a passage from the seventh book of the *Stromateis* (70; cf. also *Paed.* 2.94). It is true that the head of a family—the husband and father, not both spouses together—in certain respects surpasses the unmarried man. One who adopts a solitary lifestyle is not fully human, in contrast to another who has trained himself (ἐγγυμνασάμενος) in marriage, procreation, and the providential care of a household. In caring for a household he emulates the true, divine Providence.

But why is a married men and father said to gain the prize here (νικᾷ)? Because in taking on these social duties, he has had to overcome the threats of both pleasure and discontent. In the midst of cares endured he has remained inseparable from God, and he has triumphed over all forms of temptations associated with his children, wife, servants, and possessions. Even though the head of a household is inferior to the celibate man in terms of his own salvation, the former stands out because of his victory over these challenges. As is common in antiquity, women are here ranked among temptations and sources of trouble, and together with children, servants, and external possessions. Clement’s praise of marriage in these terms is, at best, back-handed.²⁵

Thus, in the final analysis for Clement too, if marriage can be considered good, the celibate life is better (*Strom.* 3.4; 4.147, 149).²⁶

3

As we have seen, it is ultimately the so-called household codes and their scriptural context that provide the key to Clement’s view of the status of women and the value of marriage. In contexts in which he

²⁵ As is his view of sexuality when he considers the option that widows may surpass virgins in the sense that the former have had to grapple with temptation, and reject a pleasure they have once known, *Strom.* 3.101.5. Both Hägg, “Continence and Marriage,” 136, and Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*, 112 have too positive a view of this passage, in my opinion, as does Mees, “Clemens von Alexandrien über Ehe und Familie,” 121. Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker*, 201–203 acknowledges the restrictions.

²⁶ These passages have been overlooked by Hägg, “Continence and Marriage.”

follows Musonius Rufus most closely, in the second and third books of his *Paedagogus*, on the use of material things and the treatment of the body, the latter is also at his least original. Musonius Rufus' recommendations of simplicity and self-restraint belong to a broader and well-represented tradition on the importance of temperance for the sake of reason's rule. The Stoic is much more innovative in positing the equality of women and men and endorsing the value of marriage, as an affective bond that is both *symmetrical* and *reciprocal*, for the life of philosophy. But in these areas Clement does not follow suit.²⁷ There are structural parallels between Clement's treatment of these topics and questions raised by Musonius Rufus: whether women share in virtue like men, whether women should be educated in the same manner as men, and how marriage relates to the best life.²⁸ But these are stock themes, handled by others as well, notably by Plato in his *Republic* and *Laws*, works that set the tone for subsequent debates. In content, however, Clement ends up steering a much more traditional course, as we have seen.

He represents a moderate Platonism, as Marrou has already pointed out.²⁹ This attitude is particularly striking in Clement's cautious valorization of the body. The view represented in the *Alcibiades I* (which in antiquity was considered an authentic work of Plato's) of the soul using the body as an instrument is not quite sufficient for Clement. It is not the body itself that poses the problem, but our use of it; the body is meant to be not merely an instrument but a natural *ally* for the soul (*Paed.* 1.102.3). In procreation

²⁷ D. Kinder, "Clement of Alexandria: Conflicting Views on Women," *Second Century* 7.4 (1989/1990) 213–220, fundamentally underestimates Musonius Rufus' innovations, as do D. Engel, "The Gender Egalitarianism of Musonius Rufus," *Ancient Philosophy* 20 (2000) 377–391, and D. Darko, *No Longer Living as the Gentiles: Differentiation and Shared Ethical Values in Ephesians 4.17–6.9* (London, New York: T & T Clark, 2008) esp. 78–81; 84–85. In response to Kinder, it should also be noted that the earlier Antipater of Tartus (2nd cent. BCE) is more traditional than Musonius Rufus, and that the more conventional (though groundbreaking in other respects) Plutarch is not a Stoic. The most traditional among the later Stoics is Seneca, cf. Reydam's-Schils, *The Roman Stoics*, 143–176; cf. also E. Asmis, "The Stoics on Women," *Feminism and Ancient Philosophy*, ed. J. Ward (New York-London: Routledge, 1996) 68–92.

²⁸ Cf. also I. Ramelli, "La tematica de matrimonio nello Stoicismo Romano: alcune osservazioni," *Ilu* 5 (2000) 145–162; "Transformations of the Household and Marriage Theory between Roman Stoicism, Middle-Platonism, and Early Christianity," *Rivista Di Filosofia Neoscolastica* 2–3 (2008) 369–395; and "Il matrimonio Cristiano" in *Clemente: un confronto con la legislazione Romana e gli Stoici Romani*, 351–371.

²⁹ In his general introduction to the *Sources Chrétiennes* volumes containing the *Paedagogus*, 70, p. 32; on the Middle Platonist background of Clement's writings, cf. S. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria. A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

properly conducted, even sperm becomes sanctified (*Strom.* 3.46.5),³⁰ and there is no need for Clement, when he is discussing procreation, to feel shame over naming body parts which God was not ashamed to create (*Paed.* 2.92.3).³¹ No body part is shameful in its own right, it only becomes so through illicit use (*Paed.* 2.52.2). Hence it is not detachment from the body that will lead to spiritual growth, but the other way around, and without implying any contempt for the created order (*Strom.* 4.147–148; cf. also 163–165).

In spite of his attraction to Plato's idea of a community in which all members would be considered siblings (cf. *Strom.* 5.98.1, discussed above), Clement cannot endorse the notorious recommendation to hold all women (and children) in common. He ingeniously rewrites that aspect of the *Republic* by transposing it to the courtship phase before marriage, when women are available to all to be seen so that men may choose their future partners. Women are "common property" only to the extent that a theater is shared by an audience (*Strom.* 3.10.2). This image of a theater is also present in Cicero's *De Finibus* (3.67) when he tries to defend the notion of private property in the community of universal humanity: in a theater accessible to all, we each hold our own seat. Epictetus presents an even more striking parallel (*Diss.* 2.4.9–10), because he also uses the theater image to argue explicitly against adultery and holding women "in common." But Clement hardly stands alone in correcting Plato in this manner in order to preserve the traditional social relationships. Epictetus, for instance, claims that Plato intended to replace the traditional bond between a man and a woman by another type of marriage (F15=53 Schweighäuser). And Plutarch proposes an interpretation in terms of the union of *souls* between spouses (*Am.* 767E). Seneca uses the phrase of children being held in common to underscore that a child belongs to both parents (*Ben.* 7.12.1), an interpretation that strengthens rather than annihilates the parental bond.

Given his own Platonist leanings Clement cannot avoid addressing the problem, in the third book of his *Stromateis*, that those who altogether reject the body, marriage, and procreation draw support for their position

³⁰ The sacred aspect of marriage and family life is at the core of F. Draczkowski, "Die Heiligkeit von Ehe und Familie nach Klemens Von Alexandrien," *Vox Patrum* 5 (1985) 95–125 (in Polish, with a summary in German).

³¹ There is a parallel here to an attitude which Cicero attributes to the Cynics and those Stoics who are would-be Cynics, in his *De Officiis* 1.128, and which he vehemently rejects as going against common decency.

from Plato, as well as from the Pythagoreans. Clement himself gives an overview of statements culled from Plato, the Pythagoreans, and a long list of other ancient authorities who have serious misgivings about procreation (*Strom.* 3). He uses a double strategy to cope with this hermeneutical problem: he argues, on the one hand, that those with erroneous views followed Plato too closely (as in 93.3), or, on the other hand—and this appears to be the dominant strategy—that they simply misunderstood Plato (as in *Strom.* 3.21.2; an approach he also uses against the promiscuity camp, cf. 10.2 above, on women and children being held in common). Unlike Marcion, for instance, Clement suggests, Plato does not reject the order of the universe, and does not deem matter irredeemably evil (19.3, the connection here is that the bodily condition is derived from matter). Clement explains away the negative view of procreation as resulting merely from the many hardships associated with the rearing of children; this view does not, Clement suggests, have a deeper, metaphysical basis in a rejection of creation (22.1). Similarly, the Pythagorean rejection of sexual pleasure (ἀφροδίσια) does not entail a rejection of marriage, as long as it serves procreation and the spouses abstain from sex once the procreative phase in their lives is over, in order to avoid the risk of becoming entangled in pleasure (cf. above). Clement does not even shy away from reinterpreting the famous prohibition against eating beans as in reality based on beans' negative effect on women's fertility (24).

With these last observations, Clement himself points to the connection between the household codes and Neo-Pythagorean writings on the household, some of which are attributed to women.³² This hint is confirmed elsewhere too. In the fourth book of the *Stromateis*, after the extended quotation from Clement of Rome (cf. above, 105–119) that ends with examples of biblical heroic women, Clement himself adds two more examples, as well as a list of pagan exemplary women (120–123). Among the women philosophers, he mentions in the first place Theano, the pupil

³² Developed fully in D. Balch, "Neopythagorean Moralists and the New Testament Household Codes," in *ANRW* II.26.1 (1992) 380–411. Cf. also M. Plessner, *Der OIKONOMIKOS des Neupythagoreers 'Bryson' und sein Einfluss auf die islamische Wissenschaft*, Orient und Antike 5 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1928); F. Wilhelm, "Die *Oeconomica* der Neupythagoreer Bryson, Kallikratidas, Periktione, Phintys," *Rheinisches Museum* 70 (1915) 161–223. The texts are collected in H. Thesleff, *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*, Acta Academiae Aboensis, Humaniora 30.1 (Abo: Abo Akademi, 1965). Part of the ps. Ocellus Lucanus (43b–51) is included and discussed in Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 66–67, 231–237. The same material also forms the background to the so-called *Sentences of Sextus*, edited by H. Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959) and Porphyry's letter to his spouse, Marcella (Chadwick, 141ff.).

or perhaps spouse of Pythagoras, with two anecdotes that testify to her chastity, and he includes also Theano's daughters, Myia and Arignote (in addition to Epicurean, Megarian, Cynic, and Cyrenaic women philosophers, as well as two alleged women members of Plato's Academy, Lastheneia and Axiothea, and Aspasia, who is supposed to have assisted Socrates).

The Neo-Pythagorean texts systematically emphasize a wife's submission to her husband (as well as children's to parents, and slaves' to masters). The so-called letter of Phintys in particular reveals striking parallels with Clement's use of the household codes. The letter is devoted entirely to the topic of temperance as *the* primary virtue of a woman (cf. especially 152.3–4, 16–18 Thesleff).³³ Phintys covers five topics under the heading of temperance (as summarized by Balch, 1992, 400): “sanctity about the marriage bed [the Neo-Pythagorean texts, however, unlike Clement, do not present the same standard of chastity for men], ornamentation of the body, a concern for when a wife may go outside the house, refraining from orgies in mystery cults, and moderation in sacrifices to divinity” (152.20–24). Of these, the chastity injunction is considered the most important. The last two topics, of course, would be transformed in Clement's Christian framework.

So what are we to make, then, of the fact that the passage in book 4 of the *Stromateis* on women's and men's virtue (59–65), with the references to the household codes (63.5–65), is embedded in a context in which Clement endorses Paul's egalitarian claim that social distinctions are transcended in Christ (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11)? How could Clement consider these two sets of injunctions, one of which clearly posits the submission of wives to their husbands, compatible? For Clement, as it turns out, women progressively abandon their femininity as they become perfected and move closer towards the Christian ideal, starting *in life* beyond their childbearing years for those who are married. This point of view does not undermine the status of masculinity, but, on the contrary, reinforces it: as women and in the physical reality of their bodies these Christians rank lower than their male counterparts, even though as human beings they have the same potential for virtue, especially in facing martyrdom. And in marriage, which is intrinsically connected to procreation, wives are

³³ And it has to be noted, this is the dominant view, cf. also, for instance, Seneca on *pudicitia* (*Cons. Helv.* 16.3–5; 19.6–7; *De Matrimonio* 78–79 Haase) and Plutarch (*Coniugalium Praecepta*, *passim*).

submitted to their husbands. But the marital relationship too, at best, is only a temporary phase *even in life itself*. Being a woman and being a spouse, therefore, are, *merely stages*, which, moreover, only *some* Christians pass through. Hence Clement can recognize the positive value of womanhood and marriage, yet also point out intrinsic limitations which can be overcome only in the eschatological dimension of his Christianity.

TRAVELING UP AND AWAY: JOURNEYS TO THE UPPER AND OUTER REGIONS OF THE WORLD

Adela Yarbro Collins

Ascents to heaven and journeys to the ends of the earth in the literature of antiquity do not constitute a genre, since writings of several different kinds include accounts of them. It seems better then to take such ascents and journeys as a theme in the Bible, post-Biblical Jewish and Christian texts, as well as in Greek and Roman works. Some earlier and later texts from Mesopotamia and Persia are included to fill out the picture a bit.¹ Two general types may be discerned in ancient literature. In the first, the ascent occurs instead of death or at death. The person or soul that ascends remains in heaven.² Some accounts of this type are narrated from the perspective of the traveler; others from the perspective of those left behind. In the second, the ascent occurs during the traveler's lifetime. The person or soul that ascends returns home after visiting or touring heaven or the ends of the earth.³

BRIEF HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

Members of the history of religion school were the first to study texts about ascents to heaven in a comprehensive way. Scholars of this "school" approached both biblical and extra-biblical texts by placing them in their cultural contexts. In a related development in the field of classics, Albrecht Dieterich published a text giving instructions for an ascent to heaven. This text is part of the collection known as the Greek Magical Papyri. Dieterich gave the work the title, "a Mithras liturgy."⁴ The major contribution of the history of religion school was to show the way in which ancient Jewish and

¹ Due to the limits of time and space, Egyptian texts and the works discovered at Nag Hammadi are not discussed here.

² C. Colpe, E. Dassmann, J. Engemann, and P. Habermehl, "Jenseitsfahrt I (Himmelfahrt)," *RAC* 17 (1996) 407–466.

³ C. Colpe and P. Habermehl, "Jenseitsreise (Reise durch das Jenseits)," *RAC* 17 (1996) 490–543.

⁴ A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903; 2nd ed.; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966). See now the commentary by H.D. Betz, *The*

Christian religious ideas and practices were embedded in the Hellenized and Romanized cultures of the eastern Mediterranean world. The failure of specific hypotheses or terminology does not undercut the value of this achievement. The theological problem raised by the method was the issue whether and how Christianity could be seen as unique and what value other religious traditions might have. Wilhelm Bousset was probably the most influential member of the history of religion school. He published a study of ascent texts in 1901.⁵ In it he argued that the two general types of ascent are closely related: the ascent during life through the practice of ecstasy anticipates the final ascent after death. He had two aims in writing this essay. One was to show that the great religions of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, on this point at least, have a common history and have influenced each other. The other was to show that one particular religion has priority on this point and had the greatest influence on the others (the Iranian).⁶ He began with Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic materials because they can be dated most precisely.⁷ Then came a survey of Iranian religion, the mysteries of Mithras, Mandaean religion, and Babylonian religion. Next came a synthesis of the related Greek material (including Philo), followed by a comparison of Greek and oriental eschatology. Finally, he offered a brief discussion of certain mixed entities (Greek-oriental): Chaldean Oracles and the Hermetic corpus.⁸ He concluded that the phenomenon does not have its roots in Christianity. It existed already in the Jewish texts and practices of the time of the New Testament, and there is evidence that it continued in Jewish circles for centuries. But Judaism is not the home of this phenomenon either. The ideas are too rare and occur in unusual texts. They were recognized as heretical in the second century CE.⁹ At this point Bousset noted that accounts of ascent are closely tied

"Mithras Liturgy": Text, Translation, and Commentary (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 18; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

⁵ W. Bousset, "Die Himmelsreise der Seele," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 4 (1901) 136–69, 229–73. See also the discussion of his work by A. Segal, "Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity, and Their Environment," in W. Haase, ed., *ANRW* II.23.2 (1980) 1333–1394, especially 1341.

⁶ On the influence of Persian tradition on the theme of ascents, see also Segal, "Heavenly Ascent," 1342–1443. On the "Mesopotamian background," see *ibid.*, 1343. In the latter discussion, he follows G. Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (King and Saviour 3; Uppsala: Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift, 1950).

⁷ On the variety of uses of the theme of ascent in the Nag Hammadi corpus, see Segal, "Heavenly Ascent," 1384–1385.

⁸ The word "oriental" was used at the time to refer to Near and Middle Eastern cultures. See now E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

⁹ Today such judgments are challenged.

to the notion of a certain number of heavens (most often three or seven). They are also tied to a complex of ideas, images, and practices: heavenly clothing or bodies; sacramental anointing with oil; demons that threaten or hinder the progress of the soul.¹⁰ His analysis of the earliest Persian materials led him to the conclusion that some elements are very early: the teaching about the ascent of the soul, its being accompanied by angels or demons, a certain number of stations on the way (three or four), the coming of the soul before the throne of the highest God and his angels. He did not, however, find Persian evidence for the ecstatic practice that he saw as an anticipation of the ascent after death. The evidence for such practice is in very late sources. The parade example is the *Arda Viraf* (fourth cent CE or later).¹¹ In the Jewish, Persian, Mandaean, and perhaps also in the Mithraic material, Bousset found evidence for the replacement of an earlier notion of three heavens by that of seven heavens.¹² He also argued that the teaching of seven heavens and seven planetary gods originated in late Babylonian religion.¹³

Then he presented evidence that a syncretism of Iranian and Babylonian ideas began already in the time of the Achaemenids (c. 550–323 BCE) and continued during the time of Alexander and his successors. This mixing took place in Mesopotamia. Since this occurrence is so important for Hellenistic syncretism, Bousset gave further evidence for this conclusion.¹⁴

On Persian tradition and its influence, Bousset concluded that the original, purely Iranian notion was of three heavens and over these, Paradise. After death, the soul ascends through these three heavens to the throne of God. There may perhaps have been a teaching, already in pre-Christian times, that one could experience that ascent through ecstasy already during one's lifetime. In any case, these ideas were part of Mithraism from the beginning. From there they came into certain Jewish circles and from there into Christianity.

¹⁰ Bousset, "Himmelsreise," 153–154.

¹¹ Bousset, "Himmelsreise," 160–161. See now P. Gignoux, *Le Livre d'Arda Viraf: transliteration, transcription, et traduction du texte pehlevi* (Bibliothèque Iranienne 30; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1984). See also Colpe and Habermehl, "Jenseitsreise," 499–502; Colpe *et al.*, "Jenseitsfahrt," 413–414.

¹² Bousset, "Himmelsreise," 234–235.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 237. See also A. Yarbro Collins, "The Seven Heavens in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses," in J.J. Collins and M. Fishbane, eds., *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 59–93.

¹⁴ Bousset, "Himmelsreise," 245–248.

With regard to Paul, Bousset noted that Mithraism was current in Tarsus from the first century BCE, but he got his form of ecstasy from his “rabbinic” past.¹⁵ Along the way, the teaching of the ascent of the soul picked up some Babylonian elements.¹⁶ The main one is the notion of seven heavens related to the planetary gods. The notion that the rulers of each heaven or sphere hinder the way of the soul may also be of Babylonian origin. The mixture was inherited by Gnostic systems and Mandaean religion. “Judaism” rejected this tradition in the second century CE, “Christianity” in the third. Unofficially it lived on. It had an influence on Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and it survives in Persian Islam.¹⁷

On the relation of Greek tradition to this complex of ideas, Bousset concluded that the coherent eastern notion of the ascent of the soul did not derive from the confused thought-world of Plato and his successors.¹⁸ This conclusion is supported by the following observations: (1) Wherever the journey of the soul to heaven or to Hades appears in Greek literature it is connected with the notion of the wandering of the soul; sometimes this involves a return to earthly life. Sometimes the notion of rewards and punishments in the beyond occurs, but even here, there is the notion of the movement of the soul upward and/or downward by stages.¹⁹ (2) On the other hand, in the East, there is no notion of the wandering of the soul. This difference suggests that the “oriental” ideas, including “Judaism” and “Christianity,” were not influenced at their core by Greek ideas. Nevertheless Greek thought did make a contribution to this complex of ideas: (1) The notion that the soul is not at home on earth in a body is Greek.²⁰ (2) Perhaps the transference of the tortures of Hades from the underworld to the regions over the earth (found in Stoic eschatology) had an influence on the representations of the ascent of the soul. This influence may be seen in later texts where the lower heavens are places of punishment or inhabited by evil demons.²¹

¹⁵ Bousset, “Himmelsreise,” 248–249.

¹⁶ Cf. the section on “Mesopotamia” in Colpe and Habermehl, “Jenseitsreise,” 498–499.

¹⁷ Bousset, “Himmelsreise,” 249.

¹⁸ On the Greek and Roman material see Colpe and Habermehl, “Jenseitsreise,” 502–534.

¹⁹ Bousset, “Himmelsreise,” 258.

²⁰ Bousset, “Himmelsreise,” 261–262. Compare J.Z. Smith’s distinction between “locative” and “utopian” religions in his book *Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (SJLA; Leiden: Brill, 1978), and *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990).

²¹ Bousset, “Himmelsreise,” 262. On the views of the early Stoics concerning the movement of the soul after death, see K. Algra, “Stoics on Souls and Demons: Reconstructing

Carsten Colpe is the author of a more recent study of ascents to heaven in antiquity.²² He argued that the ascent of the soul and journeys of the soul are closely related to the inter-religious phenomenon of shamanism studied by Eliade and others.²³ In archaic culture, the ecstasy of the shaman has two main purposes: healing and hunting.²⁴ This ecstasy is not mystical and not redemptive.²⁵ He also argued that, with regard to urban civilizations (*"der hochkulturelle Bereich"*), there is evidence that Zoroaster was an ecstatic. There is an ecstatic tradition in early Greece and the same in Iran.²⁶ In his view there are two main types of ascents: (1) those spoken of by the Orphics, those depicted in Plato's stories or myths (*mythoi*), Plutarch's *On the Face of the Moon*, the inscription of Antiochus of Commagene, traditions in Lucian, Hellenistic astrology, and Seneca; (2) speculation on the correspondence between the macrocosmos and the microcosmos; examples: Middle Platonism, especially Philo; Hermetic literature; the "Mithras Liturgy"; Chaldean oracles; and Neoplatonic texts. In the transition from Greek, Iranian, and Jewish ascent traditions to Gnostic traditions, life in the temporal, physical world for the first time becomes something which needs redemption.²⁷ The presence of the motif of the ascent of the soul is not a simple litmus test for Gnosticism.

Another comprehensive study of ascents is that by Ioan Culianu (or Couliano).²⁸ He concluded that Babylonian tradition had a variable number of heavens. He also argued that the association of seven heavens with seven planets could not have derived from Babylon, because the idea that planets orbited at different distances from the earth was first developed

Stoic Demonology," in D. Frede and B. Reis (eds.), *Body and Soul in Ancient Philosophy*; Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2009) 369–370.

²² C. Colpe, "Die 'Himmelsreise der Seele' ausserhalb und innerhalb der Gnosis," in U. Bianchi, ed., *Le origini dello gnosticismo* (SHR 12; Leiden: Brill, 1967) 429–447.

²³ M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Bollingen Series 76; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964). See also Colpe and Habermehl, "Jenseitsreise," 494–498.

²⁴ Colpe, "Himmelsreise," 434. See also Eliade, *Shamanism*, 182, 302–304 (healing), 299, 459 (hunting).

²⁵ According to Eliade, however, "It is always the shaman who conducts the dead person's soul to the underworld, for he is the psychopomp par excellence" (*Shamanism*, 182).

²⁶ On Greek "shamanic" tradition, see Colpe and Habermehl, "Jenseitsreise," 502–504.

²⁷ On Gnostic material, see also Colpe et al., "Jenseitsfahrt," 447.

²⁸ I.P. Culianu, *Expériences de l'extase: Extase, ascension, et récit visionnaire de l'hellénisme au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Payot, 1984). See also I.P. Culianu, *Psychanodia: A Survey of the Evidence concerning the Ascension of the Soul and Its Relevance* (Leiden: Brill, 1983) and I.P. Culianu, *Out of This World: Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Albert Einstein* (Boston: Shambhala, 1991).

by Greeks in the time of Plato.²⁹ Thus, the study of ancient religion must be informed by the study of ancient science. Furthermore, one cannot use late Iranian texts as evidence for early Iranian religion.³⁰ He agreed with Wilhelm Anz that the ascent of the soul is the central motif of Gnosticism.³¹ Culianu also argued that the practice of ecstasy may be inferred from Nag Hammadi texts and from Hippolytus's accounts of Gnostics. He believed that it was not necessary to posit Iranian influence on Greek texts of ascent because of the tradition about "shamans" in early Greek culture.³²

Culianu discerned two types of ascents in ancient literature: (1) the "Greek" type in which beliefs about ascents are conformed to scientific hypotheses; examples are the Gnostics, Hermetic literature, Numenius, Macrobius, Servius, Proclus, and other Neoplatonists;³³ (2) the "Jewish" type in which the seven heavens are not identified with seven planetary spheres; examples are Jewish apocalyptic texts, Christian apocalyptic texts, texts about the ascent of Mohammed. He also included in this type Plato's story about Er and Plutarch.³⁴ James D. Tabor distinguished four types of ascent: (1) ascent as an invasion of heaven; (2) ascent to receive revelation; (3) ascent to heavenly immortality; and (4) ascent as a foretaste of the heavenly world.³⁵

²⁹ The flaw in this argument is that the Babylonians associated the seven heavens with the seven planetary *gods*, not the *orbits* of the planets. Similarly, Jewish and Christian ascents through seven heavens presuppose a series of firmaments or layered heavens, not planetary spheres. See Yarbrow Collins, "The Seven Heavens in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses."

³⁰ In support of this conclusion, he cited G. Gnoli, "Questioni comparative sull'Ascensione d'Isaia: la tradizione iranica," in M. Pesce (ed.), *Isaia, il diletto e la chiesa: Visione ed esegesi profetica cristiano-primitiva nell'Ascensione di Isaia* (Brescia: Paideia, 1983) 117–132; see, however, G. Widengren, A. Hultgård, and M. Philonenko, *Apocalyphtique iranienne et dualisme qoumrânien* (Recherches Intertestamentaires 2; Librairie Adrien Maisonneuve, 1995); A. Hultgård, "Persian Apocalypticism," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, ed. J.J. Collins, *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1998) 39–83.

³¹ Culianu, *Expériences*, 11–12; Bousset and Colpe had qualified this claim.

³² Culianu, *Expériences*, 25–43.

³³ This type overlaps a good deal with Colpe's type involving a comparison of the macrocosmos and the microcosmos.

³⁴ This type overlaps with Colpe's first type.

³⁵ J.D. Tabor, *Things Unutterable: Paul's Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts* (Studies in Judaism; Lanham, Maryland: University Press of American, 1986) 69–95.

TOWARD A TYPOLOGY OF ASCENTS

Type 1: Ecstatic Journeys of Shamans

As more or less the oldest type of ascent to heaven, the ecstatic journeys of shamans may be designated type 1. Eliade defined shamanism in the strict sense as a phenomenon of Siberia and central Asia.³⁶ The word comes, through Russian, from the Tungusic *shaman*. The other languages of central and north Asia have corresponding terms. In this region the shaman is the dominant magico-religious figure. Similar phenomena have also been observed in North America, Indonesia, Oceania, and elsewhere.³⁷ In these societies the dominance of the shaman is the exception rather than the rule. Among magicians and medicine men, the shaman is distinctive in specializing in a particular kind of “trance during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld.”³⁸

The initiatory ascent is symbolized by climbing a rope, tree, or ladder. These symbolize the Cosmic Tree or Axis of the World. The shaman falls into ecstasy as he climbs.³⁹ The initiatory ascent gives the future magician the power to fly, cover immense distances in a twinkling, and become invisible.⁴⁰ In some cases a deep trance is produced without the use of drugs or alcohol. The drumming of other shamans may be an inducing technique. Dancing and singing are the most common methods.⁴¹ In other cases narcotics produce a semi-trance, or the journey is mimed in dramatic form.⁴² The initiation of the shaman may involve ascent to the sky and instruction by celestial beings. The ritual of ascent among the Altai (central Asia) involves a journey through seven or more heavens. The number depends on the power of the shaman. It may be twelve or even more. The secrets about the future are revealed in a long conversation

³⁶ For more recent research on shamanism, see the discussion, based on the work of Å. Hultkrantz, by J.R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People behind the Hekhalot Literature* (JSJ Supplements 70; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 43–48. See also Segal, “Heavenly Ascent,” 1351.

³⁷ On shamans and soul journeys among the Mayan people of Mexico, see R.M. Laughlin and C. Karasik, *The People of the Bat: Mayan Tales and Dreams from Zinacantan* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988). I am grateful to my former student, Ireri Chavez Barcenas, for bringing this study to my attention.

³⁸ Eliade, *Shamanism*, 4–5; quotation from p. 5.

³⁹ Eliade, *Shamanism*, 120–121.

⁴⁰ Eliade, *Shamanism*, 140.

⁴¹ Eliade, *Shamanism*, 243.

⁴² Eliade, *Shamanism*, 24.

with a deity. No descent is represented: the shaman collapses, exhausted, and then comes out of the trance.⁴³ Eskimo shamans, whose practices are in clear continuity with Asian shamanism, sometimes undertake “ecstatic journeys to the sky, to the land of the dead, ‘for joy alone.’”⁴⁴ The journeys of shamans are ecstatic and out of the body. They have two main purposes: initiation of the shaman and service to the community (healing, assistance with hunting, divination).

Type 2: Ascents of the King

The traditional notion of the ascent of the king involves his deification and role as a mediator between heaven and earth. During the king’s lifetime, he is portrayed as ascending to heaven to obtain things and knowledge of use to his people. A certain Etana, a shepherd, is listed as one of the kings of the Sumerian city-state, Kish. Cylinder seals of the Old Akkadian period depict a shepherd rising heavenwards on the wings of an eagle. A legend, known in the Old Babylonian, Middle Assyrian, and Neo-Assyrian periods, says that he was destined to establish kingship on earth for the security of humankind. This project was hindered by his lack of a child. So Etana was to go to heaven to get the plant of birth. The texts are incomplete, but he was apparently successful since he is listed as having a son.⁴⁵ Enmeduranki was the seventh antediluvian king of Sippar in Mesopotamian tradition.⁴⁶ He ascended to heaven and was received by Shamash (the sun god) and Adad (god of storm and rain). There he learned oil- and liver-divination and a ritual involving a cedar-rod. The same “mythological fragment” says he learned astrology and related mathematics. Later texts speak of the king’s final ascent to heaven to become a god. King Antiochus I of Commagene had his tomb constructed and placed an inscription on it probably between 50 and 35 BCE. The inscription says that his outer form would be preserved in the tomb and rest there for an immeasurable time, after his soul had ascended to the heavenly thrones of Zeus Oromasdes. Since the preface to the inscription describes him as a god, the idea seems to be that he would dwell in heaven as a god.⁴⁷

⁴³ Eliade, *Shamanism*, 190–217.

⁴⁴ Eliade, *Shamanism*, 291.

⁴⁵ E.A. Speiser, “Etana,” in J.B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (ANET)* (3rd ed.; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969) 114–118. See also Colpe and Habermehl, “Jenseitsreise,” 498–99.

⁴⁶ W.G. Lambert, “Enmeduranki and Related Matters,” *JSC* 21 (1967) 126–138.

⁴⁷ W. Dittenberger, ed., *OGIS:SIG* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–05) 1. #383 (pp. 591–603). For an English translation, see F.C. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions* (Library of the Liberal Arts; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953) 20–25.

Romulus, the legendary first king of Rome, disappeared suddenly. Some thought he had been murdered and dismembered by his enemies, but the dominant interpretation supposedly was that he had been taken up to heaven and deified by his father Mars.⁴⁸ The language of “disappearing” indicates that he was taken up body and soul. After Julius Caesar’s enemies murdered him, his body was cremated and his ashes placed in the family tomb. It was believed, however, and officially declared by the Senate, that his soul had ascended to heaven and become a god in the form of a star.⁴⁹ When Augustus died in 14 CE, the Senate voted his deification immediately after the funeral.⁵⁰ A junior senator, Numerius Atticus, swore in public that he had seen the late emperor ascending to heaven.⁵¹

Type 3: Ascent as a Problem

Some texts explore the ambiguities of the quest for immortality and deification and express the impossibility of such for most humans, sometimes including the king. Some of these texts assert that deification and immortality were once possible, but the opportunity was once lost or has since become unavailable. One version of the story of Adapa is attested in the archives of El-Amarna in Egypt (fourteenth century BCE) and three others were found in the library of Ashurbanipal (ruled from 668–627 BCE).⁵² According to one of the latter versions, Adapa, son of the god Ea, “breaks the wing of the south wind” by cursing it. When the south wind ceases to blow, the god Anu hears about this cessation and summons Adapa to heaven. Ea instructs him to refuse the bread of death and the water of death when they are offered to him in heaven. When they offer him a garment, he is to put it on, and when they offer him oil, he is to anoint himself with it. Ea then made him take the road to heaven, so he ascended and approached Anu. They offered Adapa bread of life and water of life,

⁴⁸ Livy 1.16.3–7; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 14.805–828. On the ascent of Romulus as a model for the ascent of Julius Caesar, see Segal, “Heavenly Ascent,” 1347–1348. On the deification of Romulus as modeled on that of Heracles, see Colpe *et al.*, “Jenseitsfahrt,” 421–422.

⁴⁹ Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.745–870. On Caesar’s burial, see M. Beard, J. North, and S. Price, *Religions of Rome* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 1.180. On his deification, see Colpe *et al.*, “Jenseitsfahrt,” 427–428.

⁵⁰ The fullest description is that of Cassius Dio, 56.31.2–43.1; see also Suetonius *The Twelve Caesars*, *Divus Augustus* 2.100; Colpe *et al.*, “Jenseitsfahrt,” 428–429.

⁵¹ Suetonius says that an ex-praetor swore that he had seen Augustus’s spirit ascending to heaven; *Divus Augustus* 2.100.

⁵² D.B. Redford, “Amarna, Tell El-,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 1 (1992) 181–182; A.K. Grayson, “Ashurbanipal,” *ibid.*, 494.

but he refused them. When they brought him a garment, he put it on, and when they gave him oil, he anointed himself with it. Anu then declared to him that, since he neither ate nor drank, he would not have eternal life. He then commanded that Adapa be returned to the earth.⁵³

In the Akkadian Gilgamesh epic, Gilgamesh goes on a quest of immortality when he sees his friend Enkidu die and he himself begins to fear death. He travels to Utnapishtim, the flood-hero, who had joined the assembly of the gods, hoping that the immortal hero would help him gain immortality. To reach him he must cross the Waters of Death, which are normally barred to the living. Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of the flood and how afterward the gods made him and his wife immortal, like the gods, residing at the mouth of the rivers. The flood hero then tells Gilgamesh to stay awake for seven days and seven nights if he would be immortal. The hero's wife baked wafers and put them at Gilgamesh's head (apparently one wafer per day) and marked on the wall the days he slept—seven days! On the return trip, Urshanabi, the boatman, tells Gilgamesh to dive down and pick a plant that restores youth. He resolves to take it home with him to Uruk, but when he stops for a swim, a serpent steals it.⁵⁴

The Watchers who descended from heaven, took human wives, and begot sons are condemned in 1 Enoch 13 and 14–15. In their original cultural context, these passages may express criticism, on the part of traditional Jews, of the claims to divinity by the successors of Alexander. The criticism would be aimed at an alleged mixing of the human and the divine.⁵⁵ An excellent example of this type may be found in a portion of the Persian *Shah Namah*, the *Book of Kings*. A poet by the name of Firdausi composed this work. He lived from 941 to 1019 CE, collecting and rewriting the legends of Persia, and preserving many much older stories taken from Pahlavi (Middle Persian) sources.

The king Kai-Kaus became a wise ruler but was tempted by a demon in the form of a pleasant youth to learn the secrets of the universe. He decided to do this by ascending to heaven. He sent men to capture eaglets to raise them, feeding them chicken and lamb. The king selected the four strongest ones. He then had a frame built of special wood and upright

⁵³ E.A. Speiser, "Adapa," in Pritchard, *ANET*, 101–2. See also Colpe and Habermehl, "Jenseitsreise," 499.

⁵⁴ E.A. Speiser, "The Epic of Gilgamesh," tablets VII–XI in Pritchard, *ANET*, 85–96.

⁵⁵ G.W.E. Nicklesburg, "Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 383–405, especially 396–397.

spears attached to each of the corners, from which a leg of lamb dangled. In the center of the frame was his golden throne. Wearing a golden tunic and a jeweled crown, he seated himself on the throne and ordered that the four eagles, who had not been fed for twenty-four hours, be tied to the four corners by their feet. The eagles, chasing the legs of lamb, bore him to a high altitude. In the meantime his advisors discovered the king's plan and found him seated on his throne in a valley. They admonished him severely and mocked his attempt to "count the stars and see the sun and moon." Kai-Kaus was persuaded of the folly of his attempt and did penance for this indiscretion for forty days. Then he "emerged from his retreat and reigned again."⁵⁶

Type 4: Ascents of Cultural Heroes

Texts that describe the ascents of cultural heroes, such as prophets, wise men, lawgivers, founders, and teachers, are common in ancient Jewish literature. Paul's account in 2 Corinthians 12 also fits here.

Type 4a: Legitimation of the Hero, Mediation, and Intercession

In some cases, the purpose of the ascent is to confer a new status or authority on the hero or to legitimate him in the eyes of the audience of the text, sometimes involving special powers. 1 *Enoch* 12–13 and 14–15 fit here from the point of view of Enoch's relation to the heavenly world. According to 12:1–13:3, Enoch was taken from earth and brought to the presence of God in heaven so that he could take a message from God to the Watchers who had gone down to the earth. Then the Watchers ask Enoch to intercede for them. He does so, but their petition is denied, since they should be interceding for humanity, rather than the other way around (13:4–16:4). A detailed and impressive account of Enoch's ascent is included in 14:8–23. In the Greek *Testament of Levi*, Levi says that an angel opened the gates of heaven to him, and he saw the Lord sitting on a throne in the holy temple. God addresses him, saying "Levi, to you have I given the blessings of the priesthood until I come and dwell in the midst of Israel."⁵⁷ This passage seems to have as its aim a legitimation of the Levitical priesthood,

⁵⁶ Trans. from N.L. Goodrich, *The Ancient Myths* (New York: Mentor Book/New American Library, 1960) 144–147, quotations from 147.

⁵⁷ *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: The Testament of Levi* 5:1–2; translation by M. de Jonge in H.F.D. Sparks, ed., *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) 528.

telling the story of its origin in the divine will.⁵⁸ Both of these examples may also be read in terms of the hero mediating between heaven and earth, interceding for those on earth, or dealing with a crisis.

Type 4b: To Obtain Revelation

In other cases, the purpose of the ascent is to gain or be granted revelation. The Greek *Testament of Levi* has this purpose as well as the legitimation of the Levitical priesthood. Levi travels through three heavens (chapter 2) and is told "about the seven heavens" by the angel of the Lord (chapter 3). In the second heaven are fire, snow, ice, and spirits (or winds) of retribution to be unleashed in the righteous judgment of God for vengeance on the wicked. The third heaven holds warrior hosts "appointed to wreak vengeance on the spirits of error and of Beliar at the day of judgment." Levi also receives the revelation that angels (apparently in the sixth heaven) make expiation for the unwitting sins of the righteous. The emphasis is on sin, expiation, and judgment, though other details of the higher heavens are revealed as well.⁵⁹

In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the patriarch ascends to heaven with an angel, both of them riding on the pigeon and the turtledove that Abraham had offered to God (chapters 12–15, based on Genesis 15). The revelation that Abraham receives in the account of chapters 15–32 is summarized beforehand, when God says to Abraham, "I will show you the things [that] were made by the ages and by my word and affirmed, created, and renewed. And I will announce to you in them what will come upon those who have done evil and just things in the race of man."⁶⁰ Abraham ascends immediately to the highest, seventh heaven and sees God as fire on a throne of fire (chapters 18–19). Abraham is at first overwhelmed, but sings a song of praise that the angel had taught him (chapters 15–17). After he sings the song, he is granted a vision of the chariot. Here the song is part of the means of achieving an ascent, rather than, as in the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and the "Similitudes of Enoch," a

⁵⁸ Segal argues that the rhetoric of the text aims at legitimating the priestly claims of the Hasmonean dynasty ("Heavenly Ascent," 1360–1362).

⁵⁹ *The Testament of Levi* 3; Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, 526–527.

⁶⁰ *Apocalypse of Abraham* 9:9–10; trans. by R. Rubinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," in J.H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 1.693. Segal argues that this work aims at reassuring its audience that the seeming contradictions of life, especially acute after the destruction of the second temple, will be resolved ("Heavenly Ascents," 1362–1363).

sign that the visionary has achieved angelic status after ascent.⁶¹ Another summary of the revelation (now specified as given through an ascent) occurs in chapter 12. The angel promises to show Abraham what “is in the heavens, on the earth and in the sea, in the abyss, and in the lower depths, in the garden of Eden and in its rivers, in the fullness of the universe.”⁶² After Abraham has had his vision of the chariot in the seventh heaven, God (a voice coming out from the midst of the fire) shows him the other six heavens, each with its own firmament, beginning with chapter 19.

In the sixth expanse (19:6), Abraham sees spiritual angels without bodies. Hosts of stars are in the fifth heaven and the elements of earth that obey them (19:9).⁶³ After a short dialogue between God and Abraham, “the Eternal Mighty One” shows him the divine plan for creation in the form of a picture that is located in the third heaven (21:2; 22:2). The picture is a pre-figuring or an outline of what will be.⁶⁴ It depicts the works of creation, including paradise and hell, and humanity divided into two groups, Abraham’s descendants on the right side and all other people, some righteous, some evil, on the left. It also contains a review of history, which seems to contain one or more Christian interpolations.⁶⁵ The revealed eschatological scenario includes ten eschatological plagues.⁶⁶ The description of the end in 29:17–20 is plausibly Jewish.

In the “Similitudes of Enoch” (1 *Enoch* 37–71), Enoch travels to heaven in a whirlwind and later reveals what he experienced when he ascended to heaven.⁶⁷ He sees the resting places of the righteous, which are with the righteous angels and in the presence of the Chosen One.⁶⁸ The dwelling

⁶¹ M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 64. She also notes here that the style of this song is close to a type of hymn preserved in the *hekhalot* literature.

⁶² *Apocalypse of Abraham* 12:10; Rubinkiewicz, 695.

⁶³ “Hosts of stars” could also be translated “powers of stars” and “elements” may be related to the Greek στοιχεῖα; Rubinkiewicz, notes i and j to chapter 19, p. 699. This description may reflect magical practices or astrology or simply the idea that a star (angel) has authority over each element, for example, water and fire; see Rev 14:18; 16:5.

⁶⁴ A. Pennington translates “everything I had planned to be came into being: it was already pre-figured in this” (22:3); “The Apocalypse of Abraham,” in Sparks, 384; Rubinkiewicz, “Whatever I had decreed was to exist had already been outlined in this” (22:2), in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1.700.

⁶⁵ E.g., *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29:3–13.

⁶⁶ *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29:15–16, a transformation of the ten plagues against Egypt (Exodus 7–12; cf. the seven eschatological plagues in Revelation 15–16). For an enumeration of the plagues, see *Apocalypse of Abraham* 30:4–8.

⁶⁷ 1 *Enoch* 39:3–14.

⁶⁸ This figure is also called “that son of man” (in an allusion to Dan 7:13–14), the Righteous One, and Messiah; see J.C. VanderKam, “Righteous One, Messiah, Chosen One,

of the Chosen One is “beneath the wings of the Lord of Spirits.”⁶⁹ The *Ascension of Isaiah* also portrays the purpose of Isaiah’s ascent as the reception and communication of revelation, at least in part. The cosmology of this work distinguishes primarily between the earth and firmament on the one hand and the seven heavens, which are holy, on the other. There are distinctions among the heavens as well. The sixth and seventh are considerably more holy and glorious than the lower five. Only the lower five have, respectively, a ruler or throne in its midst and angels on the left who are inferior to those on the right. When the Beloved (Jesus Christ) descends, he does not need to be transformed in the sixth heaven, because it is in harmony with the seventh. In the lower five, however, he is transformed. In addition he must give a password in the lower three. This mild opposition between the lower and the upper heavens may be related to reports about the theories of Basilides, the Valentinians, and the Ophites in Irenaeus and Tertullian.⁷⁰ Early Jewish and Christian apocalypses do not link the seven heavens to the seven planets. The oldest text to make such a link is the pagan tractate *Poimandres* (of the Corpus Hermeticum), which dates to the 2nd cent. CE.⁷¹

Isaiah’s ascent is described as a vision, that is, his body remained on earth (seeing and hearing nothing), while his mind was taken up from him.⁷² The angel who guides Isaiah on his tour of the seven heavens reveals to him that he and all the just will receive a throne, a robe, and a crown, which await them in the seventh heaven. For this reason, they are not to worship any angel or throne from the (lower) six heavens. Upon hearing this revelation, Isaiah rejoices “that those who love the Most High and his Beloved will at their end go up [to the seventh heaven] through the angel of the Holy Spirit.”⁷³ Like the messianic figure of the “Similitudes of Enoch,” Christ (the Beloved) is also called the “Chosen One” (8:7). Another important revelation Isaiah receives is a vision of the descent of the Lord

and Son of Man in 1 *Enoch* 37–71,” in J.H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 169–191.

⁶⁹ 1 *Enoch* 39:7; trans. from G.W.E. Nickelsburg and J.C. VanderKam, 1 *Enoch: A New Translation Based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004) 53.

⁷⁰ B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1987) 420–425; Culianu, *Psychanodia*, 9. See also the opposition to Isaiah’s ascent in *Ascension of Isaiah* 9:1–5.

⁷¹ Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 445–462.

⁷² *Ascension of Isaiah* 6:10–12.

⁷³ *Ascension of Isaiah* 7:21–23; trans. from M.A. Knibb, “Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah,” in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:143–76; quotation from 167. See also *Ascension of Isaiah* 8:5.

(the Beloved) from the seventh heaven to earth. The account alludes to and explains the statement of Paul that the rulers of this age knew nothing about the secret wisdom of God; otherwise they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor 2:8).⁷⁴ The *Ascension of Isaiah* interprets this to mean that the angels of the lower heavens were unaware of the Lord's descent because he disguised himself, transforming himself into the likeness of the angels of each heaven, as he descended.

Paul refers to his own ascent to heaven, introducing it in an indirect way by attributing it to "a man in Christ" (2 Cor 12:2). He asserts twice that he does not know whether the ascent occurred in the body or out of the body (12:2–3). He states that in Paradise the ascender "heard inexpressible words that no man is permitted to speak" (12:4). If this statement implies that Paul received revelation in Paradise, it is not a revelation given and received in order to communicate it to other human beings. Paul does speak about receiving a revelation in relation to his "thorn in the flesh," namely, that it was given to him to keep him from exalting himself. He also reveals that the risen Christ refused to remove it and spoke to Paul, saying "My help is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (12:7–9).

The description of the ascent of Enoch in 2 *Enoch* reflects an interest in cosmology. He ascends on the wings of angels to the first heaven, and they place him on the clouds. There he could see the air higher up and the aether.⁷⁵ In the first heaven Enoch sees a vast ocean.⁷⁶ It is probably inspired by "the waters above the firmament" of Gen 1:7. In the very long recension, the second heaven is darker than any earthly darkness (7:1). According to both the very long and the short recensions, this heaven contains places of punishment for fallen angels (7:2–3).⁷⁷ This placement may reflect the shift in cosmology that took place after the time of Plato. By the time of Plutarch, the idea of a subterranean abode of the dead had been abandoned, at least by the philosophically and scientifically informed.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ *Ascension of Isaiah* 10:9–16.

⁷⁵ Homer made the simple distinction between air and aether; F.I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1.110, note e. Aristotle counts the aether as the fifth element (*ibid.*).

⁷⁶ 2 *Enoch* 3:3 in the long recension and 4:2 in the short (see next note).

⁷⁷ Andersen distinguished a very long recension (J, P, and P²), a long recension (R), a short recension (A, U, Tr, Syn), and a very short recension (B, N, V, B², Rum); "2 *Enoch*," 93. In this discussion of 2 *Enoch*, I refer to the "very long recension" simply as the long recension and to the "short recension" as the short recension.

⁷⁸ Plutarch *The Face on the Moon*; cf. Tabor, *Things Unutterable*, 63–64, 101, n. 25.

Both the older conception of the underworld and the newer cosmology are present in *2 Enoch*.⁷⁹ The place of punishment of the human wicked is in the third heaven, where they are tortured by angels (chapter 10).

According to the short recension, Enoch sees Paradise in the third heaven (8:1). In the long recension (8:1 and 42:3), Paradise seems to be on earth, but it is "open as far as the third heaven." According to chapter 9, Paradise is the eternal inheritance of the righteous. The criteria for membership among "the righteous" are ethical. In contrast, the elect and righteous are mostly equivalent to the poor in the "Similitudes of Enoch." Then the angels take Enoch up to the fourth heaven (11:1) and explain to him the movements of the sun (chapters 13–14), which seem to reflect observation of the summer and winter solstices (13:3b–4).⁸⁰ In the fifth heaven Enoch sees the Grigori (Watchers), who are the leaders of the fallen angels located in the second heaven (or under the earth).⁸¹ The placement of the leaders in the fifth heaven and the followers in the second (or under the earth) is perhaps a reflection of the political and social hierarchy on earth. Angels in the sixth heaven regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies and thus the seasons and years (chapter 19). Other angels in the same place regulate the produce of the earth, and yet others record the deeds of human beings. According to the short recension, God is enthroned in the seventh heaven, and Enoch sees him from a distance (20:3). The long recension locates God in the tenth heaven. The long recension mentions the eighth, ninth and tenth heavens (21:6–22:1). Enoch sees the eighth and ninth, but does not seem to stop in either one. In 22:1 he describes the face of the Lord. In the tenth heaven, Enoch is transformed and becomes "like one of the glorious ones" (22:8–10). Vrevoil or Vereveil, one of the archangels, who records the deeds of the Lord, trains Enoch to do likewise. Then the angel dictates all sorts of revelation to Enoch (chapter 23). Then the Lord begins to speak to Enoch about creation (chapter 24). God made the existent from the non-existent and the visible from the invisible (24:2b). This doctrine is different from Genesis and from Plato's *Timaeus*, according to each of which creation means shaping pre-existent matter. Even the Wisdom of Solomon (first century BCE or CE) still reflects the old idea (11:17). The only "invisible things" mentioned are personal beings,

⁷⁹ Andersen, "2 *Enoch*," 114, n. i. Cf. *2 Enoch* 7 with 18:7.

⁸⁰ *2 Enoch* 13:13a in the long recension may refer to the equinox; see Andersen, "2 *Enoch*," 124, n. i.

⁸¹ They are in the second heaven according to the long recension (18:3); they are under the earth according to both recensions in 18:7.

Adoil (25:1) and Arkhas (26:1). Things are revealed to Enoch that are not revealed even to angels (24:3). Compare Hebrews 1 (Jesus, as God's son, is superior to the angels) and the *Epistula Apostolorum*.⁸² The process of creation is somewhat similar to Gnostic myths (chapters 25–26). Here the language is of disintegration and in Gnostic myths it is of giving birth or begetting, but both have the idea of heavenly beings producing the material world out of themselves. This notion is perhaps related to old Egyptian myths.

The long recension reflects awareness of the scientific doctrine of seven planets in seven spheres (27:3; 28:1), but it is not integrated into the cosmology described elsewhere in the work. As Andersen points out, the cosmology involves layers in a symmetrical system.⁸³ This system is similar to Babylonian cosmology. In both recensions, God creates the angels from fire (29:3). Genesis does not mention the creation of angels, but *Jubilees* does (2:2). The story of the rebellion of Satan occurs in the long recension (29:4–6). It is based on Isaiah 14, which in turn is based on the Canaanite myth of Athtar.⁸⁴ This is the oldest clear evidence for the reading of Isaiah 14 as the fall of Satan. Compare Revelation 12, where Michael and his angels cast Satan and his angels out of heaven. The revelatory account of creation continues through chapter 30. An account of the transgression of Adam and Eve follows (chapter 31–32). In chapters 33–35 the flood and the rescue of Noah are predicted. Enoch then descends to earth with the same angels who took him upward because God has given him thirty days to speak to his sons before he is taken to heaven permanently (chapters 36–38). He imparts the revelation he has received to them and admonishes them to do the will of the Lord (chapters 39–66). Enoch's final ascent in 2 *Enoch* will be discussed in under type 4c.

Type 4c: Ascent as a Foretaste of Permanent Ascent

The first ascent of Enoch in the "Similitudes of Enoch" is of this type (1 *Enoch* 39:3–14). A whirlwind snatches him up, and he sees, among other things, the dwelling of the Chosen One beneath the wings of the Lord of Spirits (39:7). He then says, "There I wished to dwell, and my spirit longed for that dwelling. There my portion has been from the first, for thus it has been established concerning me in the presence of the Lord of Spirits."⁸⁵

⁸² Andersen refers to the latter text, "2 *Enoch*," 142, note d.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 146, note b.

⁸⁴ Pritchard, *ANET*, 140, lines 52–65.

⁸⁵ 1 *Enoch* 39:8; trans. from Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 1 *Enoch*, 53.

In the *Ascension of Isaiah*, his angelic guide informs him, “no man who has to return into a body of that world [has come up, or seen] or understood what you have seen and what you are to see, for you are destined in the lot of the Lord, the lot of the tree, to come here . . . [when from the body by the will of God you have come up here], then you will receive the robe which you will see.”⁸⁶ When he sees the sixth heaven, Isaiah already entreats his guide that he “should not return to the world of flesh” (8:23). The angel informs him that he must return because “your days are not complete for coming here” (8:28). When he hears this, Isaiah is sad.

Type 4d: Final or Permanent Ascent to a Heavenly, God-like Existence

Examples of this type include the ascent of Elijah in a chariot and whirlwind (2 Kings 2:1–18) and the disappearance of Enoch (Gen 5:21–24), the latter especially as interpreted in later texts.⁸⁷ The “Similitudes of Enoch” concludes with Enoch’s final ascent (1 *Enoch* 70–71). After visiting Paradise, his spirit ascends to heaven and then to the heaven of the heavens (70:3–71:5). When he sees the Head of Days, his flesh melts and his spirit is transformed (71:10–11). What happens next is unclear and disputed. He is addressed as “that son of man who was born for righteousness” upon whom righteousness dwells. It is not clear whether he is being identified as “that son of man” who is the Chosen One and the Messiah or as a human being who is righteous in an exemplary way.⁸⁸

According to Deuteronomy, Moses died in the land of Moab without entering the promised land. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, “but no one knows his burial place to this day”

⁸⁶ *Ascension of Isaiah* 8:11–14; trans. from Knibb, “Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah,” 168. See also 7:22, “For above all the heavens and their angels is placed your throne, and also your robes and your crown which you are to see,” and 9:24–26, where Isaiah sees many robes, thrones, and crowns prepared for those who believe in the words and the cross [of Jesus].

⁸⁷ Josephus says that “Elijah disappeared from among men” (Ἡλίας ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἡφανίσθη) and that he, like Enoch, became invisible (γεγόνασιν ἀφανείς), and “no one knows of their death”; *Ant.* 9.2.2 §28; text and trans. from Ralph Marcus, *Josephus* (9 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937) 6.16–17.

⁸⁸ VanderKam concludes that Enoch is identified with the Son of Man and that chapter 71 is an integral part of the Similitudes (“Righteous One,” 182–185). J.J. Collins allows that the address may be interpreted as identifying Enoch with the Son of Man or as extolling him as a righteous human being. If the former is the case, the identification is secondary and a response to the identification of Jesus with the Son of Man of Daniel 7. See A. Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008) 92–93.

(Deut 34:1–6). Josephus, however, did not take this report of Moses' death seriously. The remark that no one knows his burial place may have indicated to him that Moses had not actually died. In any case, Josephus wrote that Moses went with all the people to the place where he was to disappear (ἀφανισθήσεσθαι), persuaded the people to stay back, taking only the elders, Eleazar the high priest, and Joshua the general to the mountain called Abaris, opposite Jericho. He then dismissed the elders. While he was saying farewell to Eleazar and Joshua, a cloud descended upon him and he disappeared in a ravine. "But he has written of himself in the sacred books that he died, for fear lest they should venture to say that by reason of his surpassing virtue he had withdrawn to the deity."⁸⁹ Philo also implies that Moses did not die. He says that God "resolved his twofold nature of soul and body into a single unity, transforming his whole being into mind (νοῦς), pure as the sunlight."⁹⁰ He prophesied the story of his own death "while he was already being exalted (ἀναλαμβάνόμενος) . . . ready at the signal to direct his upward flight to heaven."⁹¹

The case of Heracles is analogous.⁹² His wife, Deianira, smeared on his clothing a mixture of the blood and semen of Nessus, a centaur whom Heracles had killed for attempting to violate his wife. Nessus had tricked Deianira into thinking that the blood was a love charm. So she put it on his garment, fearing that he would love Iole, his new wife, more than herself. The blood, however, was poisonous. To escape the resulting agony, Heracles had a pyre built, mounted it, and persuaded someone to light it. According to the *Library*, "While the pyre was burning, it is said that a cloud passed under Hercules and with a peal of thunder wafted (ἀναπέμψαι) him up to heaven. Thereafter he obtained immortality (ἀθανασία), and being

⁸⁹ Josephus *Ant.* 4.8.48 §323–326; trans. from H.S.J. Thackeray, *Josephus* (9 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1930) 4.633. I have changed his translation of ἀναχώρησαι from "he had gone back" to "he had withdrawn" and "divinity" to "deity." See also Josephus's remark about Enoch: "he withdrew to the deity" (ἀνεχώρησε πρὸς τὸ θεῖον); *Ant.* 1.3.4 §85.

⁹⁰ Philo *On the Life of Moses* 2.51 §288; trans. from F.H. Colson, *Philo* (10 vols.; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935) 6.593.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* §291; Colson, *Philo*, 6.595.

⁹² An account of his life appears in Apollodorus *Library* 2.4.6–2.7.8. On the relation of this text to Mark and ancient "lives" or "biographies," see A. Yarbro Collins, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Probing of Mark in Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992; reprint, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2001) 17–23. On Heracles' ascent and deification, see Colpe *et al.*, "Jenseitsfahrt," 418–420.

reconciled to Hera he married her daughter Hebe, by whom he had sons.”⁹³ Other examples of this type include the ascension of Jesus according to Acts 1, the permanent ascent of Enoch in 2 *Enoch* 67, and the prediction of the same experience of Baruch in 2 *Baruch* 76. Philostratus includes several accounts of the end of Apollonius.⁹⁴ According to one, he disappeared (ἀφανισθῆναι) in the temple of Athena in Lindos. Another relates his spectacular entrance into the temple of Dictynna in Crete, where he was instructed to “Ascend from earth!” (ἴθι ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἄνω).⁹⁵ After his disappearance, Apollonius appeared to a skeptical youth and convinced him that the soul is immortal.⁹⁶

Peregrinus, later called Proteus, was a Cynic philosopher from northern Asia Minor, active in the second century CE. Aulus Gellius considered him to be a man of dignity and fortitude, but Lucian wrote a satirical essay on his career, portraying him as a self-serving imposter. His fame rests mainly on his self-immolation at the Olympian Games of 165 CE.⁹⁷ He apparently did so in imitation of Heracles in order to teach others “to despise death and endure what is fearsome.”⁹⁸ Lucian says Peregrinus claimed that he would become a guardian spirit of the night (δαίμων νυκτοφύλαξ) and coveted altars and being imaged in gold.⁹⁹ He evidently expected that he would ascend to Mount Olympus and become immortal, as Heracles did.¹⁰⁰ Lucian’s avowedly fictional account of Peregrinus’s passing satirizes the apotheosis of the emperors. When he flung himself on the pyre, a vulture (γύψ) flew up from the midst of the flames saying, “I am through with the earth; to Olympus I fare.” Lucian also says that he met a man telling people that he had seen Proteus after his cremation, clothed in white raiment and wearing a garland of wild olive.¹⁰¹ Whereas Lucian thought Peregrinus

⁹³ Apollodorus, *Library* 2.7.7; text and trans. from J.G. Frazer, *Apollodorus: The Library* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921) 1.270–73. See also Yarbrow Collins, *Beginning*, 141–142.

⁹⁴ On the ascent of Apollonius, see Colpe *et al.*, “Jenseitsfahrt,” 421.

⁹⁵ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 8.30.2–3; text and trans. from C.P. Jones, *Philostratus: The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (2 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005) 2.218–421.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8:31.1–3.

⁹⁷ C.P. Jones, “Peregrinus,” *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd ed. 1996) 1138. See also Colpe *et al.*, “Jenseitsfahrt,” 421, who dates the event to 167 CE.

⁹⁸ Lucian, *The Passing of Peregrinus* 23; trans. from A.M. Harmon, *Lucian* (8 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936) 5.27. See also section 33 of the same work.

⁹⁹ Lucian, *The Passing of Peregrinus* 27; Harmon, 30–31.

¹⁰⁰ Lucian, *The Passing of Peregrinus* 29; Harmon, 32–33.

¹⁰¹ Lucian, *The Passing of Peregrinus* 39–41; Harmon, 44–47.

laughable, he provides evidence that many believed he had ascended to Mount Olympus and become immortal.

Type 4e: The Ambiguity and Danger of Ascents

According to the Mishnaic tractate *Hagigah* 2:1:

The forbidden degrees [regarding sexual relations and thus marriage in Lev 18:6–18] may not be expounded before three persons [i.e., it is forbidden to expound it before more than two], nor the story of creation [Genesis 1] before two, nor [the chapter of] the chariot [Ezekiel 1; also Ezekiel 10 and Isaiah 6] before one alone, unless he is a sage who understands of his own knowledge. Whosoever gives his mind to four things it were better for him if he had not come into the world—what is above? what is beneath? what was beforetime? and what will be hereafter?¹⁰²

The implication is that the passage about the chariot (*merkabah*) is the most esoteric of the scriptures. This passage is cited in the tractate *Hagigah* of the Babylonian Talmud (folio 11b). The *gemara* on the part of the *mishnah* that begins “nor [the work of] the chariot in the presence of one” begins on folio 13a. The *gemara* contains various traditional anecdotes relating to the expounding of the chariot. Some of these relate to the criteria for worthiness to expound and to hear exposition; others describe the dangers of doing so, for example, a child reading this passage was consumed by fire. The most relevant anecdote for our topic occurs on folio 14b and concerns the four who entered the garden:

Our Rabbis taught: Four men entered the ‘Garden’, namely, Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma; Aher, and R. Akiva. R. Akiva said to them: When ye arrive at the stones of pure marble, say not Water, water! For it is said *He that speaketh falsehood shall not be established before mine eyes* [Ps 101:7]. Ben Azzai cast a look and died. Of him Scripture says: *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints* [Ps 116:15]. Ben Zoma looked and became demented. Of him Scripture says: *Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it* [Prov 25:16]. Aher mutilated the shoots. R. Akiva departed unhurt.¹⁰³

The Hebrew word used here for “garden” is *pardes*, which means “enclosure, park, pleasure garden.” The metaphorical meanings “heaven” and

¹⁰² *Hagigah* 2:1; trans. slightly modified from Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) 212–213.

¹⁰³ B.T. *Hagigah* 14b; trans. from I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Moed* (London: Soncino, 1938) 90–91. Compare the shorter version of the anecdote in y.T. VII A-D; trans. J. Neusner, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*, vol. 20, *Hagigah and Moed Qatan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 45.

“esoteric philosophy” have also been proposed. Gershom Scholem translated “orchard.”¹⁰⁴ According to Brown, Driver, and Briggs, the term means “reserve, park,” and it is a loan-word from Zend (a form of ancient Persian) meaning “enclosure.” It is related to the Greek word *paradeisos*.¹⁰⁵ Klaus Beyer translated the term in the Aramaic fragments of Enoch with “the garden [with trees] of truth,” that is, “Paradise.” It occurs in 1 *Enoch* 32:3 (Adam and Eve are mentioned in the context) and is restored in 77:3. (Its location is in a zone of the earth distinct from the one in which people live).¹⁰⁶

There are various theories about what it means to “enter the garden.” Gershom Scholem argued that there was an essential continuity from the pseudepigraphic apocalypses to the *merkabah* speculation of the mishnaic teachers to the *merkabah* mysticism of late- and post-Talmudic times. The central theme of all of these was throne-mysticism. He criticized scholars who argued that “Paradise” is a Talmudic metaphor for Gnosis or cosmological speculation regarding the primal matter (*materia prima*). He argued instead that the passages in the Talmud and Tosefta about the four who entered Paradise refer to a *real* danger in the process of ascent.¹⁰⁷ By comparison with a *Hekhalot* text, he argued that this danger involved an experience at the gate of the sixth palace. At that point it seems as though many waves of water storm against the one ascending, and yet there is not a drop of water, only the glitter of the marble plates with which the palace was tessellated. If the one ascending asks, “What is the meaning of these waters,” the guardians of the gate wound him.¹⁰⁸ According to Scholem, in the story about the four, the Hebrew word *pardes* is used with double meaning: orchard and Paradise. Aramaic fragments of 1 *Enoch* support the meaning “Paradise.”¹⁰⁹ The relevant phrase is *pardes kushta*, which means paradise of truth or of righteousness. The meaning “orchard” is evident

¹⁰⁴ G.G. Scholem, “The Four Who Entered Paradise and Paul’s Ascension to Paradise,” in *idem*, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (2nd, rev. ed.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965) 16.

¹⁰⁵ F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907; reprint with corrections 1972) s.v.

¹⁰⁶ K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1984) 242–243, 255–256; see also 670.

¹⁰⁷ G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1941) 52.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 52–53. He cites another *Hekhalot* text stating that Ben Azzai said “Water, water” at this point in his ascent, and they decapitated him (*ibid.*, 15). In another manuscript of the same work, Ben Zoma went out of his mind at that point in his ascent, but Rabbi Akiva ascended in peace and descended in peace (*ibid.*).

¹⁰⁹ See the discussion of K. Beyer above.

from the remark that Aher cut down the saplings, whatever this metaphor might signify.¹¹⁰

David Halperin has argued that the word *pardes* is not used in rabbinic Hebrew to mean Paradise. It is simply a pleasure garden or park.¹¹¹ The passage thus falls into the category of rabbinic parables that use the image of a pleasure garden or park to represent the world, the holy land, the people of Israel, or the precepts of Torah.¹¹² In the original story Aher's cutting the young plants means that he learned Torah but did not practice. Halperin admits, however, that this metaphor does not fit what happened to the three companions very well. According to him, Akiva's going out safely means that he departed this life free of taint and heresy and entered celestial bliss.¹¹³ This interpretation, however, does not explain what "he went in safely" means. Furthermore, Halperin cannot explain "looking and dying" or "looking and being smitten" in the original story as he reconstructs it. In his view, the parable was "mystified," that is, turned into an account of ascents to heaven, in a Babylonian context in the fourth century CE. He seems to imply that the practice of ascent is not earlier than that date.¹¹⁴

Type 4f: Self-Presentation as Such a Divinely Inspired Cultural Hero or Wise Man

Parmenides, the Presocratic philosopher, was born around 515 BCE (said to be 65 years old in Plato, *Parmenides* 127b). A.H. Coxon argued that his philosophical poem was probably published about 480 BCE.¹¹⁵ This poem was written in hexameters and survives only in large fragments. Martha Nussbaum notes that the poem is infused with religious language and conjectures that "an initiation in reason is being substituted for the perception-suffused initiations of religious cult." The main points of the poem are: (1) If something can be thought or spoken about, it must *be* (impossible to think or talk about nothingness or the non-existent); (2)

¹¹⁰ Scholem, *Major Trends*, 16.

¹¹¹ D.J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (TSAJ 16; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988) 6, n. 9. He doubts that the Aramaic fragments of 1 *Enoch* are relevant (*ibid.*, 32).

¹¹² Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 33.

¹¹³ Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 33–34.

¹¹⁴ Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 36–37.

¹¹⁵ A.H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides: A Critical Text with Introduction, Translation, the Ancient Testimonia and a Commentary* (Assen: The Netherlands and Wolfeboro, New Hampshire: Van Gorcum, 1986).

we cannot talk about temporal change, internal qualitative variation, and plurality without making contrasts and thus using negative language; therefore, whatever can be talked about must be “without birth or death, whole, single-natured, unaltering, and complete.”¹¹⁶ The speaker of the poem is carried aloft in a chariot drawn by horses and driven by maidens. These charioteers are the daughters of the sun, the god Helios. On their journey, the speaker and his entourage leave “the abode of night for the light.” They bring the speaker to a great gate, which is described in an impressive, realistic, and detailed manner. This gate is in the aether, the highest, lightest part of the cosmos. It is bolted and locked. A divine being, Δίκη, that is, retributive justice, has charge of the keys. It is necessary to persuade this divine being to allow a living human being to pass through. The maidens do so, and the speaker goes through the gate. On the other side of the door is a goddess (θέα) who gives revelation to the one who has ascended. In this case, the content of the revelation is philosophical.

Type 5: Ascents of Magicians and Other Religious Specialists

The main example of this type is the text Dieterich named “a Mithras liturgy.”¹¹⁷ In the present form of the text, the ascent has two purposes, which are distinguished here as two subtypes.

Type 5a: Initiation and Deification or Immortalization

The ascent is presented as, or closely associated with, an initiation of the type known from the mystery cults. The one who has ascended is called a μύστης (line 744). The ritual (called “the immortalization” or “deification”) is said to occur three times a year (line 747). According to line 627, it is the πνεῦμα of the person that ascends.

Type 5b: Divination

In the fifth scenario or stage of the ascent, the initiate encounters the god Helios (lines 628–661). The one who ascends petitions Helios to announce him to the god Mithras. Here Helios acts as gatekeeper and messenger, announcing visitors to Mithras.¹¹⁸ Then comes the specification of the request: that Mithras may appear and give revelation during the good

¹¹⁶ M.C. Nussbaum, “Parmenides,” *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd ed. 1996) 1113–1114; quotations from 1113.

¹¹⁷ See the section “Brief History of Scholarship” above, pp. 135–40.

¹¹⁸ Betz, *The “Mithras Liturgy,”* 169.

hours. The purpose and goal of the ritual is to obtain an oracular session with the god.¹¹⁹ In the seventh scenario or stage (lines 692–732), the practitioner addresses the god as “lord” and asks, “Give revelation concerning the NN matter.” To give revelation here means to give an oracular response (χρηματίζειν, line 717).¹²⁰ The formulation makes clear that the ascent may be performed in order to inquire about any matter of concern to the magician or his or her clients. The account of the ascent seems to end abruptly without any account of the god’s dismissal or a ritual of return (195–96).

Type 6: Ascent to Immortality as a Possibility for Every Human Being

Those who actualize this possibility are rightly instructed and have the proper disposition. Texts that belong to this type may express a doctrine of the soul or may not.

Type 6a: Visit to Heaven as an Educational Experience

The purpose of the visit may be to instruct the one who ascends about his or her true nature, to provide a foretaste of one’s ultimate destiny, or to give reassurance. An example apparently without a doctrine of the soul is the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, a work discovered at Qumran.¹²¹ This text consists of angelic praises of God for the first thirteen sabbaths, that is, for the first quarter of the solar year. It may be that praises for the other weeks of the year have not survived, or perhaps these thirteen are to be repeated in each quarter. One aspect of the work’s historical importance is its description of the divine throne-chariot, the main object of later Jewish mysticism. It seems thus to provide evidence for the early history of such mysticism. Its main scriptural inter-texts are Ezekiel 1 and 10 (chariot) and 40–48 (heavenly sanctuary). 4Q400 (fragment 1, column 1, lines 1–4) mentions “gods of the most holy ones.”¹²² These seem to be heavenly beings (angels) who are priests in the heavenly temple. In the same context, “those converted from sin” are mentioned.¹²³ These are presumably people on earth, probably the members of the Community = *yahad*,

¹¹⁹ Betz, *The “Mithras Liturgy,”* 169.

¹²⁰ Betz, *The “Mithras Liturgy,”* 189.

¹²¹ C. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Harvard Semitic Studies 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

¹²² 4Q400 1 I 1–4; text and trans. from F. García Martínez and E.J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 2.806–9.

¹²³ 4Q400 1 I 16; García Martínez and Tigchelaar, 2.808–809.

known from the *Community Rule*. In another fragment of the same scroll, it is said, “[What] is the offering of our tongue of dust (compared) with the knowledge of the divinities?”¹²⁴ This is an unfavorable comparison of earthly worship, even the worship of the Community, with heavenly worship.

The seventh Sabbath song is the centerpiece of a chiasmic structure, as Carol Newsom has argued. Whereas all the songs begin with a brief call to praise, this one begins with an elaborate, sevenfold call to praise. Its centrality is also emphasized by the frequent use of the number seven in the songs that precede and follow it.¹²⁵

Looking at the surviving work as a whole, one notices that the first song is informational, almost didactic; the sixth through the eighth are different in style and content, having a repetitious, almost hypnotic quality. In the central seventh song, the focus is on the number seven, both within the text and outside: the seventh day of the seventh week. This literary form seems crafted for the purpose of evoking a particular type of religious experience: to develop in the assembled community the sense of being present in the heavenly sanctuary and in the presence of the angelic priests and worshippers.¹²⁶ Thus the text seems to provide for those who recite or hear it a share in the liturgy of the heavenly temple. This experience, among other things, grants the earthly participants a foretaste of their immortal life in the heavenly temple after death.

Another example, with a doctrine of the soul, is Cicero’s “Dream of Scipio” (*De republica* 6.9–29). Cicero’s *Republic* was written in the mid-first century BCE. The dialogue is set in Scipio’s garden during the last year of his life (129 BCE).¹²⁷ The account that contains the dream occurs in 149 BCE, at the time Manius Manilius was consul. When Scipio Africanus the Younger returned to celebrate his triumph over Numantia in 132 BCE, he found the political scene transformed by the tribunate and death of Tiberius Gracchus. Scipio took the lead among the anti-Gracchians and championed the discontented Italians, thus provoking a major political storm. He died suddenly at the height of the crisis. In his dream he rises to

¹²⁴ 4Q400 2 7; García Martínez and Tigchelaar, 2.810–811.

¹²⁵ 4Q403 1 i 30–ii 16; Carol Newsom, “Shirot Olat Hashabbat,” in E. Eshel *et al.*, *Qumran Cave 4: VI Poetic and Liturgical Texts, Part 1* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 11; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) 173–401, especially 270.

¹²⁶ Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 17.

¹²⁷ Scipio is Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Minor (the Younger), who lived from about 184–129 BCE.

a lofty place bathed in starlight where he has conversations with both his adoptive father (Africanus the Elder) and his biological father (L. Aemilius Paullus). They show him the Milky Way where the souls of those live who loved justice and duty during their lives. They also show him the nine spheres, the first being that of the fixed stars and the ninth that of the earth. He hears the music made by the revolving of the eight spheres from the moon to the fixed stars.

The key to the rhetoric of the dream is the promise that all those who have preserved, aided, or enlarged their fatherland have a special place prepared for them in the heavens, where they may enjoy an eternal life of happiness (6.13). The final exhortation (second half of section 26) states: since the spirit or soul is immortal, it should be dedicated to the best pursuits, and the best tasks are those taken in defense of one's (Scipio's) native land, that is, Rome. The flight to heaven will be more rapid for those spirits who have detached themselves from the body, that is, those that rule over their desires for sensual pleasures rather than being enslaved by them.

Type 6b: Final or Permanent Ascent at Death

An example of this type occurs in a work entitled *Poimandres* and attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.¹²⁸ For the one who has knowledge (or "acquaintance" in Layton's translation), the material body is stripped away at death, and the soul rises to the eighth heaven where it becomes god.¹²⁹ Not only does the body dissolve but the faculties and passions of the soul are given back to their various sources in each of the lower seven heavenly spheres. Only the intellect or true self is left after this process.¹³⁰ In the eighth heaven this true self joins others who are there and they praise god, who is with higher powers above the eighth heaven. Then they ascend to god, the parent, and become powers, thus coming to be within god.¹³¹ The work ends with *Poimandres*, the revealer, commissioning the recipient of the revelation to be a guide to those who are worthy so that god may save the race of humanity through him. Then "endowed with power and educated in the nature of the all and the supreme vision," the recipient goes forth to proclaim "the beauty of devotion and acquaintance." A summary of his proclamation, its reception, his new way of life, and his prayer

¹²⁸ For an introduction and English translation, see Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 449–59.

¹²⁹ *Poimandres* 24–26; Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 457–458.

¹³⁰ *Poimandres* 24–26; Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 457 and note a to section 26.

¹³¹ *Poimandres* 26; Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 457–458.

of blessing follow.¹³² Certain other works, although they do not describe ascents to heaven, are related to those of type 6. They are discussed below as types 6c–d.

Type 6c: Journey of the Soul after Death to Various Parts of the Cosmos

The primary example of this type is Plato's story of Er, which concludes his *Republic* (10.614a–621d). This text most likely served as a model for Cicero's "Dream of Scipio." The *Republic* begins as an inquiry into the meaning of justice but soon turns into a discussion of the just human being, a discussion that involves reflection on the life of the just state. It is also a discussion of the perfect city but concerns morals more than political theory. The narrator of the story of Er is Socrates, and the narratee is Glaucon. Plato included the story in this dialogue in order to complete the account of "the prizes, the wages, and the gifts that the just man receives" during his life, by describing those that he receives after death.¹³³ At the beginning of the story, Er is "slain" in battle but remained intact. When he was laid upon the pyre during his funeral, he revived and told the story of what he had seen in the world beyond.

His soul had gone with many other souls to a "mysterious region" (τόπον τινα δαιμόνιον).¹³⁴ In this place there are four openings, two in the earth and two in heaven. Two of each are for souls entering those realms and the other two are for those exiting them. Er is told by the judges that he is to be a messenger to human beings to tell them about "the other world."¹³⁵ Thus he does not enter either of the openings. When souls emerge from the openings in the earth and heaven, they go to a meadow (λειμών).¹³⁶ Er reports the case of Aridaeus the Great, who was tyrant in a city of Pamphylia a thousand years previously. He had killed his father and elder brother and done many other unholy deeds. The audience learns from this report that some sinners are unredeemable, that is, that the truly wicked have no hope (615c–616a). The rhetorical purpose of the narration of this case is clearly to deter others from committing such crimes. The meadow is not the final abode of the souls. They go on a new journey after resting

¹³² *Poimandres* 26–32; Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 458–459. The quotations are from section 27 (458).

¹³³ Plato *Republic* 10.614a; text and trans. from P. Shorey, *Plato: The Republic Books VI–X* (LCL; Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 1935) 490–491.

¹³⁴ *Republic* 614c; Shorey, *Plato*, 492–93. This region is analogous to those to which Enoch travels in the Book of the Watchers (1 *Enoch* 1–36).

¹³⁵ *Republic* 614d; Shorey, *Plato*, 494–95 (slightly modified).

¹³⁶ *Republic* 614e; Shorey, *Plato*, 494–95. Cf. Homer, *Od.* 4.561–69; Hesiod, *Op.* 167–73.

for seven days (616b). After a journey of four days, they see a column of light penetrating both heaven and earth (616b). They continue for another day and discover that the light is the belt of heaven that holds together the entire revolving circle of the universe (616c). Within the light they see the spindle of Necessity, which has a shaft and hook made of “adamant” (ἄδαμας), which is probably steel or something like it. The eight whorls or small flywheels on the spindle correspond to the eight spheres: fixed stars, sun, moon, and five planets (616c–617d).¹³⁷

The Fates, the daughters of Necessity, were enthroned here. One of them, Lachesis, was assisted by a prophet (617c–d). This prophet takes from the lap of Lachesis lots and patterns of lives and announces to the souls that each of them will choose a life in the order determined by lot. This part of the story provides entertainment as well as moral advice (617d–620d). When all the souls had chosen and their destinies were determined, they all journeyed to the plain of oblivion and drank of the river of forgetfulness. They slept and then were “wafted thence, one this way, one that, upward to their birth like shooting stars” (620e–621b).¹³⁸ At the conclusion of the story, Socrates remarks, “And so, Glaucon, the tale was saved, as the saying is, and was not lost. And it will save us if we believe it, and we shall safely cross the River of Lethe, and keep our soul unspotted from the world.” He goes on to affirm the immortality of the soul and the importance of holding to justice and wisdom.¹³⁹

Another example of this type occurs in a work of Plutarch, *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance*.¹⁴⁰ It includes the story of Aridaeus, who lived a dissipated life until a near-death experience that led to a complete reform of his character.¹⁴¹ He fell from a height, struck his neck and died. During his funeral, he revived and related his experiences while he appeared to be dead. The apparently evil souls were in frenzy and panic.

¹³⁷ Plato's cosmos has eight spheres rather than nine because he does not include a sphere for the earth as Cicero does in the “Dream of Scipio.” See type 6a above.

¹³⁸ Quotation from *Republic* 10.621b; Shorey, *Plato*, 518–19.

¹³⁹ *Republic* 621b–d; quotation from 621b–c; Shorey, *Plato*, 518–19.

¹⁴⁰ According to F.E. Brenk, the last section of this work “contains Plutarch's most unoriginal eschatological myth”; *In Mist Apparelled: Religious Themes in Plutarch's Moralia and Lives* (Mnemosyne Supplementum, 48; Leiden: Brill, 1977) 26. For an analysis of Plutarch's eschatological myths in comparison with those of Plato, see *Ibid.*, 136–42.

¹⁴¹ Brenk has argued that Plato's story of Er is more socio-political, whereas this story is more theological in tone; “The Origin and Return of the Soul in Plutarch,” in *idem*, *Relighting the Souls: Studies in Plutarch, in Greek Literature, Religion, and Philosophy, and in the New Testament Background* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998) 28–49, especially 36.

Other souls were in a pure region, joyful in aspect, and friendly.¹⁴² He met a kinsman who told him his name would henceforth be Thespesius rather than Aridaeus. He also told him that he is not dead; rather his intelligence (τὸ φρονεῖν) has left the rest of his soul behind, like an anchor, in his body.¹⁴³ His kinsman then gives him a tour of the places of punishment.¹⁴⁴ The final spectacle was the souls returning to a second birth.¹⁴⁵

Also belonging to this type is the story of Timarchus in another of Plutarch's works, *On the Sign of Socrates*.¹⁴⁶ Wishing to discover the nature of Socrates's sign (δαίμονιον), he consulted the oracle of Trophonius, performing the customary rites and descending into the cave of the oracle. He remained underground for two nights and a day. When he returned, he said that his soul had left his body and risen into pure air where he heard the music of the spheres. He sees islands, a sea or lake, two rivers of fire, and a great abyss. A voice offers to explain what he sees. Timarchus learns that the higher regions are for the gods (θεοί). The voice says that "we," apparently deities of another kind (Plutarch *On the Face of the Moon* 27 = *Moralia* 942f.), administer one of the four portions of Persephone, the portion below the path of the moon. The earth is Hades and its shadow is the Styx, the river of Hades. The moon belongs to terrestrial deities (δαίμονες). Some souls (ψυχαί) "swim up from below and are rescued by the Moon, the foul and unclean excepted. These the Moon, with lightning and a terrible roar, forbids to approach, and bewailing their lot they fall away and are borne downward again to another birth, as you see."¹⁴⁷ Timarchus sees stars that seem to be extinguished. These are "the souls that sink entirely into the body; in the stars that are lighted again, as it were, and reappear from below" are "the souls that float back from the body after death, shaking off a sort of dimness and darkness as one might shake off mud; while the stars that move about on high are the *daimones* of men said 'to possess

¹⁴² Plutarch *Divine Vengeance* 22–23 = *Moralia* 563b–564c; text and trans. from P. De Lacy and B. Einarson, *Plutarch's Moralia* (16 vols; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1959) 7.268–77.

¹⁴³ *Divine Vengeance* 24 = *Moralia* 564c; De Lacy and Einarson, 276–77.

¹⁴⁴ Brenk points out that Plutarch does not envision reincarnation for all souls; for example, in this work (564f) the souls past all healing do not return to earth ("Origin and Return," 41).

¹⁴⁵ *Divine Vengeance* 25–33 = *Moralia* 564e–568a; De Lacy and Einarson, 278–299.

¹⁴⁶ Plutarch *On the Sign of Socrates* 21–23 = *Moralia* 589f–592f. The story of Timarchus, like that of Thespesius, is more theological than socio-political in Brenk's view ("Origin and Return," 37). See also his analysis of *De genio Socratis* in *In Mist Apparelled*, 104–5.

¹⁴⁷ *Sign of Socrates* 22 = *Moralia* 591c; text and trans. from De Lacy and Einarson, 468–471.

understanding' (νοῦν ἔχειν).¹⁴⁸ The voice also tells him, "from those other souls, which from their very beginning and birth are docile to the rein and obedient to their daemon, comes the race of diviners and men inspired."¹⁴⁹ Soon thereafter Timarchus lost consciousness and then recovered, finding himself in the cave of Trophonius.¹⁵⁰

Type 6d: The Souls of the Good Ascend after Death

According to Plutarch, the souls of the good (χρηστοί) ascend to the moon after death. There they lead an easy life, but not blessed or divine until their second death.¹⁵¹ The human being is composed of body, soul, and mind.¹⁵² Earth "furnishes the body, the moon the soul, and the sun furnishes the mind . . . One death reduces the man from three factors to two and another reduces him from two to one." The first death takes place on earth and Demeter separates the soul from the body quickly and violently. The second death takes place on the moon where Persephone detaches the mind from the soul gently and slowly.¹⁵³ The good souls pass to the outer side of the moon, the side that faces heaven, on their way to the second death. That side of the moon is called the Elysian plain. When they have experienced the second death, they become deities (δαίμονες). On their way back to earth, they dwell on the side of the moon that faces earth. They then return to the earth "to take charge of oracles, they attend and participate in the highest of the mystic rituals, they act as warders against misdeeds and chastisers of them, and they flash forth as saviours manifest in war and on the sea."¹⁵⁴ The "better" daimones, some sooner and some later, achieve the ultimate alteration.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁸ *Sign of Socrates* 22 = *Moralia* 591f; De Lacy and Einarson, 470–473.

¹⁴⁹ *Sign of Socrates* 22 = *Moralia* 592c; De Lacy and Einarson, 474–475.

¹⁵⁰ *Sign of Socrates* 22 = *Moralia* 592e; De Lacy and Einarson, 476–477.

¹⁵¹ Plutarch *On the Face of the Moon* 27 = *Moralia* 942f.

¹⁵² On the threefold division of man in Plutarch's myths, see Brenk, *In Mist Apparelled*, 133–134.

¹⁵³ *Moon* 28 = *Moralia* 943a–b; text and trans. from H. Cherniss and W.C. Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia* (16 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1957) 12.196–99.

¹⁵⁴ *Moon* 29–30 = *Moralia* 944c–d; Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12.210–211; see also note c on p. 211.

¹⁵⁵ *Moon* 30 = *Moralia* 944e; Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12.212–213; Brenk speaks about "the last transformation" (Origin and Return," 42–43).

CONCLUSION

The typology proposed here is meant to be heuristic, not definitive. There are other ways in which the material could be organized, for example, according to the stated or implied purpose of the account of an ascent. In some texts the purpose is the initiation of the one who ascends, including the shaman (type 1) and the magician (type 5a). A related purpose is divination by the shaman (type 1) and the magician (type 5b). Some ascents involve the deification or immortalization of the one ascending; examples are the king or emperor (type 2), the magician (type 5a), and (in type 4d) the prophet (Elijah, Enoch, Moses, Baruch, and Jesus from one point of view) or cultural hero (Heracles, Apollonius, and Peregrinus from the point of view of his admirers). In some works an important purpose seems to be the legitimation of the one who ascends, the establishment of the authority of such a person who thus becomes a mediator and sometimes even a model for the audience. Examples are Enoch in the *Book of the Watchers* (1 *Enoch* 1–36, type 4a) and in the “Similitudes of Enoch” (1 *Enoch* 37–71, type 4b) and Levi in the *Testament of Levi* (type 4a). In some of the same works and even more so in others, one may infer that the ascent is attributed to a famous figure from the past in order to legitimate the revelation allegedly received and reported by him (type 4 b). In the case of Parmenides (type 4f), he himself is apparently the one who ascends, and it is the form of ascent (as initiation and for reception of revelation) that legitimizes his philosophical teaching. Finally a number of texts clearly have a rhetorical and hortatory purpose. They encourage their audiences to adopt a particular way of life by pointing out the post-mortem rewards to which it leads and sometimes the post-mortem punishments or misfortunes of those who choose less worthy ways of life. Examples are the *Ascension of Isaiah* (type 4c), the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (type 6a), and especially Cicero’s “Dream of Scipio” (type 6a), Plato’s story of Er, and Plutarch’s stories concerning Aridaeus/Thespesius and Timarchus (type 6c). The *Poimandres* (type 6b) and Plutarch’s *On the Face of the Moon* (type 6d) may also be understood as exhortations to particular ways of life.

THE POLYVALENT IMAGERY OF REV 3:20 IN THE LIGHT OF GRECO-EGYPTIAN DIVINATION TEXTS

David E. Aune

INTRODUCTION

The proclamation to the church of Laodicea (Rev 3:4–22), the last of seven proclamations to the churches of Roman Asia in Rev 2–3,¹ contains a striking “I”-saying that is part of a longer first-person speech attributed to the risen Jesus (Rev 3:20):

Ἴδού ἔστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· ἐάν τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν, [καὶ] εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ δειπνήσω μετ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ’ ἐμοῦ.

Behold, I stand before the door and I am knocking. If any one hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will come in to visit him and I will have supper with him and he with me.

This short passage rests somewhat uncomfortably in its present literary setting, an indication that it may have had an origin independent of its present context. One indication of this possibility is the fact that while the community at Laodicea is addressed in second-personal singular verb forms and pronouns throughout vv. 15–19, v. 20 suddenly switches to the third-person singular pronoun *τις* (“someone,” “anyone”), setting this concluding verse apart from the preceding context.² There are a few other “I”-sayings of Jesus in Revelation (1:17–20; 16:15; 22:12–13, 16), and many more in the Gospels; some have proposed that many of these “I”-sayings originated as sayings of the risen Jesus uttered by Christian prophets,³ though the arguments are far from conclusive.⁴

¹ On the use of the designation “proclamations” rather than letters for the seven messages to the churches in Rev 2–3, see David E. Aune, “The Form and Function of the Proclamations to the Seven Churches (Rev 2–3),” *New Testament Studies*, 36 (1990) 182–204.

² Akira Satake, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008) 189.

³ Rudolf Bultmann, *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 8th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970) 134–35; M. Eugene Boring, *Sayings of the Risen Jesus: Christian Prophecy in the Synoptic Tradition* (SNTSMS, 46; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁴ James D.G. Dunn, “Prophetic ‘I’-Sayings and the Jesus Tradition: The Importance of Testing Prophetic Utterances within Early Christianity,” *NTS*, 24 (1978) 175–98; David E.

Rev 3:20 has proven to be a very difficult passage to interpret as reflected in the diversity of views among commentators, some of which will be reviewed in this essay. The brief narrative in Rev 3:20 is a scene that consists of three parts: (1) the “one like a son of man” (1:13), i.e., the exalted Lord, stands before a closed door and knocks for admittance; (2) there is mention of an unidentified person within who will likely open the door,⁵ so that (3) the exalted Lord and the indweller might dine together. While this brief scene is clearly allegorical,⁶ it is not at all obvious what meaning is to be given to the door, the act of knocking, the act of opening of the door, the identity of the individual (τις) within, and the act of commensality shared by the Lord with the indweller. The imagery in this passage is polyvalent, a feature suggested not simply through the unremarkable fact that commentators disagree on its interpretation, but rather because individual commentators frequently suggest two, three or more possible meanings side-by-side without insisting on the priority of any one reading.⁷

In the present essay, after surveying the major ways in which Rev 3:20 has been interpreted by commentators ancient and modern, I will argue for the relevance of a series of Graeco-Egyptian divination texts for understanding the imagery of Rev 3:20.

MAJOR INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES TO REV 3:20

Biblical Allusions

Many modern commentators argue that Rev 3:20 contains an allusion to, or echo of, one or more biblical texts. In proposing such allusions or echoes, however, the central issue (in addition to the question of whether or not the perceived allusions are actually present), is whether or not identifying them and exploring their original meaning actually sheds light on

Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 233–35.

⁵ The protasis of the conditional clause consists of ἐάν plus the two subjunctive verbs ἀκούσῃ and ἀνοίξῃ, which constitutes a third class condition, i.e., a more probable future condition.

⁶ The mention of a door in Rev 3:8 (“Behold I have set before you an open door”) in the immediately preceding proclamation to Thyatira (3:7–13), is just as obviously metaphorical.

⁷ Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of St. John* (Black’s New Testament Commentaries; London: A. & C. Black, 2006) 78 (the author surveys various echoes that may be present in the text).

the interpretation of the passage. The imagery in the first part of Rev 3:20 is widely thought to be dependent on Song of Songs 5:2a,⁸ which has the two motifs of knocking for admission (on an implied closed door) and an appeal to the one within to open the door for the visitor:

I sleep, but my heart is awake,
Listen! My beloved is knocking:
"Open to me, my sister, my dearest,
My dove, my perfect one."

When the beloved opens the door, however, the knocking suitor is nowhere to be found, even after a fruitless and dangerous outdoor search (vv. 6–7), suggesting that the beloved had dreamed the whole episode (made explicit in the opening phrase "I sleep, but my heart is awake"). If this passage is the source of the imagery in Rev 3:20, then the unhappy outcome has been passed over in silence: when the door was opened, no one was there. Judaism transformed the originally erotic poetry of the Song of Songs for inclusion in the biblical canon by interpreting the entire poem as an allegory of the love of God for Israel (*b. Abodah Zarah* 29a). Early Christians tended to read the Song of Songs analogously, probably influenced by Jewish exegesis, as an allegory depicting Christ's love for his Church, e.g., Hippolytus of Rome (ca. 170–235 CE) or Christ's love for the individual human soul, e.g., Origen (ca. 184–254 CE).⁹ In the 9th cent. CE rabbinic tractate *Song of Songs Rabbah* 5:2, the Messiah is presented as knocking at the door waiting for his people Israel to accept him, i.e., to stir them to repentance, but by the time the hostess (Israel) opens the door, the Messiah had given up and left,¹⁰ thus reflecting the beloved's disappointment mentioned in Song of Songs 5:2. Since there is no convincing evidence, either in early Judaism or early Christianity, that such allegorical interpretations existed prior to the late second century, there is no clear evidence that John the Apocalypticist understood the Song of Songs

⁸ André Feuillet, "Le Cantique de Cantiques et l'Apocalypse: Étude de deux reminiscences du Cantique dans l'Apocalypse johannique," RSR 49 (1961) 321–53; Gregory Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 308; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1974) 107; R.H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John* (International Critical Commentary, 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920) 1.101; H.B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices* (London: Macmillan, 1906) 63.

⁹ Pierre Maraval, "Apocalypse 3/20 dans l'interprétation patristique des III^e et IV^e siècles," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, 79 (1999) 57–64.

¹⁰ George Wesley Buchanan, *The Book of Revelation* (The Mellen Biblical Commentary, 22; Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter: The Mellen Biblical Press, 1991) 123.

in any of these allegorical ways. Oecumenius (ca. early 6th cent. CE), the earliest Greek commentator on Revelation, detected an allusion to Song of Songs 5:2 in Rev 3:20 (*Commentary on the Apocalypse* 3:14–22), already part of traditional Christian interpretation of Rev 3:20.

It has also been proposed that Rev 3:20 alludes to the Parable of the Returning Master (Luke 12:35–38),¹¹ which has a close relationship to the Parable of the Doorkeeper (Mark 13:33–37),¹² by a process Richard Bauckham labeled deparabolization.¹³ Since Rev 3:20 has the form of an “I”-saying, if it is based on the parable in Luke 12:35–38, then that parable, which refers to the master in the third person, has been completely reformulated. In addition to the motif of the uncertain time of the coming of the master, often interpreted as a reference to the Parousia of Jesus,¹⁴ the motifs of “knocking” and “opening” are present in Luke 12:36b, while the motif of the common meal is found in Luke 12:37b.¹⁵ However, the returning lord does not eat with his servants but rather serves them a meal. Further, a plurality of servants is mentioned in Luke 12:35–38, while only a single individual who might hear and open the door is mentioned in Rev 3:20. The version of the parable in Mark 13:33–37, however, does have a single individual appointed as doorkeeper for the house. Three features common to both versions of the parable, however, are absent from Rev 3:20: (1) the central character is the owner of the house, (2) he has been to a wedding feast and is returning to his own house, and (3) the servants or doorkeeper are changed with watching for his return. Though Roloff argues that these motifs are all presupposed in Rev 3:20, that is simply not true.

¹¹ Beale, *Revelation*, 308.

¹² Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 263–64.

¹³ Richard Bauckham, “Synoptic Parousia Parables and the Apocalypse,” *NTS* 23 (1976–77) 162–76; *idem*, “Synoptic Parousia Parables Again,” *NTS* 29 (1983) 129–34. This article examines the tradition-history of the parables in Luke 12:35–40, and the Synoptic parallels in Mt 24:42–44; Mk 13:33–37. Aspects of these parables are also reflected in 1 Thess 5:2,4; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3,20; 16:15; Didache 16:1; Gospel of Thomas 21b, 103. These texts, in the view of the author, lead to some general conclusions about the development of the parables Jesus, including the process of “deparabolization.” Bauckham concludes that the role of Christian prophets in the transmission and formulation of the parables of Jesus was quite limited.

¹⁴ Paul E. Deterding, “Eschatological and Eucharistic Motifs in Luke 12:35–40,” *Concordia Journal* 5 (1979) 85–94.

¹⁵ Jürgen Roloff, “Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür und klopfe an: Beobachtungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Offb. 3,20,” *Vom Urchristentum zu Jesus: Festschrift J. Gnlika*, ed. H. Frankenmölle and K. Kertelge (Freiburg, Basel and Vienna: Herder, 1989) 460–61.

Several scholars have pointed out the similarities between John 14:23 and Rev 3:20.¹⁶ John 14:23 reads: “Jesus answered him, ‘If a man loves me [ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με], he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him [μονὴν παρ’ αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα].’” One of the earliest links between the two passages was made by Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 315–403 CE), who quotes Rev 3:20 twice, blending Rev 3:20 with John 14:23 in a context in which he uses the New Testament to argue against the views of Arius (*Panarion* 69.54.5; trans. Williams):¹⁷

And again, to teach his disciples his co-essentiality with the Father, he says, “If any man open to me, I and my Father will come in and make our abode with him [ἐάν τις ἀνοίξῃ μοι εἰσελθὼν ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου μονὴν παρ’ αὐτῷ ποιήσομεν].” And [here] he no longer said, “I shall be sent by my Father,” but, “I and my Father will make our abode with him,” because the Son knocks and the Father enters with him, so that they are always together, the Father is never separated from the Son, and the Son never separated from his Father.

Epiphanius quotes another blend of the two passages several lines further on (*Panarion* 69.63.8; trans. Williams):¹⁸ “And again, in another passage, he says, ‘I knock, and if any man open to me, we shall come unto him, I and my Father, and make our abode with him [ἐγὼ κρούω, καὶ ἐάν τις μοι ἀνοίξῃ, εἰσελευσόμεθα πρὸς αὐτόν, ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου μονὴν ποιήσομεν παρ’ αὐτῷ].’” These two very different ways of blending the two passages has no obvious explanation.

Eschatological Interpretations

At first glance, there seems to be very little about Rev 3:20 that could be characterized as “eschatological.” Despite this, many commentators understand Rev 3:20 in connection with the Parousia, i.e., the eschatological return of Christ.¹⁹ Interpreters have often remedied the absence of eschatology in Rev 3:20 by importing eschatological meanings into the

¹⁶ Charles, *Revelation*, 1.101.

¹⁷ English translation: Frank Williams (trans.), *Epiphanius of Salamis: Books II and III (Sects 47–80, De Fide)* (Leiden, New York and Köln: E. J. Brill, 1994) 371; Greek text: Karl Holl, *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–68 De Fide* (GCS, Epiphanius Band III; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985) 201.

¹⁸ English translation: Williams, *Epiphanius of Salamis*, 383; Greek text: Holl, *Epiphanius III*, 213.

¹⁹ Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannes* (6th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906) 233; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 63–64; J.P.M. Sweet, *Revelation* (Westminster Pelican Commentaries; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979) 109; Satake, *Offenbarung*, 189–90.

text via exegetical traditions carried by the presence of biblical allusions, such as the (late) Jewish Messianic interpretation of Song of Songs 5:2 and the intentional eschatological features of the parables of the Returning Master in Luke 12:35–38 and the Doorkeeper (Mark 13:33–37), discussed above. A few commentators understand the saying (in connection with v. 19b) to refer to a *present* “coming” of Christ to summon people to repentance or conversion,²⁰ Though neither view necessarily excludes the other.²¹ Door or gate imagery is occasionally found used in connection with the coming of God or Christ in judgment, as in James 5:9: “Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the judge is standing before the doors [πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν],” with the “judge” representing either God or Christ. A parallel in Mark 13:29 (cf. Matt 24:33) refers to Christ: “So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very doors.”

The eschatological interpretation of Rev 3:20, based primarily on the supposition that it is a transformed version or “deparabolization” of the parable of the doorkeeper in Luke 12:35–38, has no real justification in the saying itself. Rather, this view supposes that the recipients of Revelation were familiar with this parable tradition and that the author consciously intended the audience to catch the allusion to the Parousia parable of Jesus.²² Charles is correct in his insistence that the meaning of the possible sources of Rev 3:20 is a question quite different from that of the meaning of the saying in its present context. If Rev 3:20 is understood as alluding to Luke 12:35–38, Jesus may be understood as the returning master of the house, while the one who opens the door is a servant functioning as the doorkeeper. However, if the saying is understood in its own terms, the imagery is unique. The speaker is a deity who requests admission to the home of the worshiper. The meal they share, presumably provided by the worshiper, either inaugurates or celebrates the relationship between the worshiper and the deity.

Dining as Social Symbol, Eucharist or Messianic Banquet

The motif of dining together is inherently polyvalent and can be understood in several ways: (1) as a metaphor for the intimacy of table fellow-

²⁰ Charles, *Revelation*, 1.100–101; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 106–7.

²¹ Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT, 16, 3rd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970).

²² Roloff, “Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür und klopfe an,” 462.

ship, (2) as a reference to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or (3) as an allusion to the eschatological messianic banquet.²³ Again, these interpretations can hardly be considered mutually exclusive; several scholars propose a Eucharistic interpretation of the passage that merges with the conception of an eschatological messianic banquet, a view exemplified by Wilfred Harrington, O.P.: "There is a Eucharistic flavor to the promise of a meal shared by Christ and the Christian, and also a look to the supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9)."²⁴ For Grant Osborne, the dining metaphor represents table fellowship (not the Eucharist, which he considers too narrow an interpretation), but this table fellowship is also a foretaste of the final messianic banquet.²⁵

Some commentators emphasize the fact that meals in ancient Judaism symbolized acceptance, intimacy and affection;²⁶ Jesus was famously criticized for eating with tax collectors and sinners (Luke 15:2),²⁷ just as Peter was later criticized for eating with Gentiles (Acts 11:3).²⁸ Understanding the dining metaphor in Rev 3:20 in that general way would suggest that the notions of fellowship or communion with the risen Lord are primarily in view.

In an early Christian context, it is natural to think that a meal with the risen Lord represents the Eucharist, particularly by scholars embedded in more liturgically-oriented Christian traditions.²⁹ This sacramental

²³ I.T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (New York: Macmillan, 1919) 491; M. Kiddle and M.K. Ross, *The Revelation of St. John* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946) 20; Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 39; E. Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973) 35; Ulrich B. Müller, *Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament: Formgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur urchristlichen Prophetie* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1975) 75; Bauckham, "Synoptic Parousia Parables," *NTS* 23 (1976–77) 172.

²⁴ Wilfred J. Harrington, O.P., *Revelation* (Sacra Pagina; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993) 75; cf. Swete, *Apocalypse*, 64.

²⁵ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002) 213.

²⁶ Charles, *Revelation*, 1.101; George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 68; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT, 17; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 128ff.

²⁷ On Jesus' practice of table fellowship, see Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (New York: Scribner's, 1971) 193–203; Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1967) 102–8; E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 174–211; Dennis E. Smith, "Table Fellowship and the Historical Jesus," *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi*, ed. Lukas Bormann, Kelly del Tredici and Angela Standhartinger (NovTSupp 74; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 135–62.

²⁸ Ladd, *Revelation*, 68.

²⁹ Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 39; E.B. Allo, *Saint Jean, L'Apocalypse* (Paris: Gabalda, 1921) 45; George Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (London: Black,

interpretation is supported in part by the fact that Revelation was designed for a liturgical context: reading aloud before a congregation at worship (Rev 1:3). Pierre Prigent has suggested that early Christians inherited important aspects of the Easter vigil from early Jewish Passover traditions, which included the expectation of redemption on the eve of Passover, when the Messiah would be revealed and salvation, under the metaphor of the Exodus from Egypt, would become a reality.³⁰ At the Easter vigil, early Christians expected the return of Christ in a particularly fervent way, with his coming signified in the Eucharist. Prigent has therefore given a sacramental translation to the verb *δειπνήσω* in the apodosis of the conditional clause as “Je mangerai la cène avec lui.” (“I will partake of the Eucharist with him”), combining the eschatological with the sacramental interpretation of Rev 3:20.³¹ The strength of Prigent’s argument is that he proposes a specific liturgical *Sitz im Leben*; the weakness is that there is no evidence for reconstructing the pascal liturgy as early as the late first century CE.³² The Eucharistic interpretation of Rev 3:20 is very old; it first appears in Origen (*On prayer* 17) and it is also reflected in the first Greek commentary on the Apocalypse by Oecumenius, who understands dining with the Lord as signifying participation in the holy mysteries, i.e., the Eucharist (*Commentary on the Apocalypse* 3:3.14).³³

The messianic banquet as a symbol of fellowship in the Kingdom of God occurs frequently in the Gospels (Luke 14:5; 22:29ff.; Matt 8:11; 22:1–4; 26:29; cf. Rev 19:9). The apocalyptic conception of the messianic banquet, or eschatological banquet is a modern designation for a cluster of eschatological motifs that are metaphors for the presence on earth of the

1984) 58; Heinz Giesen, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1997) 143; Roloff, “Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür und klopfe an,” 464–65; Boxall, *Revelation*, 78, proposes that Rev 3:20 would have been understood as “a summons to wake up and be ready to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord worthily (1 Cor 11:27),” a ritual that anticipates the final banquet when the Lamb will feast with his bride.

³⁰ Pierre Prigent, *L'Apocalypse de saint Jean*, 3rd edition (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2000) 169; see his earlier study in *Apocalypse et Liturgie* (Neuchâtel: Éditions Delachaux et Niestlé, 1964) 30–35.

³¹ Prigent, *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*, 160, 168.

³² Ardea Russo, “Behind the Heavenly Door: Earthly Worship and Heavenly Liturgy in the Apocalypse of John,” PhD Dissertation (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2009) 18 (she critiques Prigent’s paschal liturgy proposal on pp. 16–18).

³³ *Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, ed. Marc de Groote (Louvain: Peeters, 1999) 103–4; English translation: *Oecumenius, Commentary on the Apocalypse*, trans. John N. Suggit (The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation; Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

kingdom of God in both early Jewish and early Christian literature and that centers on eschatological feasting as a way of expressing the joy and fulfillment of the righteous who have attained eschatological salvation.³⁴ The conception of an eschatological banquet has its origins in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Isa 25:6–8), and was developed in intertestamental literature into a central expectation of apocalyptic eschatology (e.g., *1 Enoch* 62.13–14):³⁵ “The righteous and elect ones shall be saved on that day . . . The Lord of Spirits will abide over them; they shall eat and rest and rise with that Son of Man forever and ever.”

*Summons to Conversion or Repentance*³⁶

A number of scholars, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries, have maintained that the primary focus of Rev 3:20 is a summons to repentance,³⁷ a view that has a strong contextual argument in the fact that the concluding word of v. 19 is the second-person singular imperative μετανοήσον (“repent”): “Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent.” According to George Ladd, Christ is here summoning members of a lifeless, complacent church to spiritual life (cf. Rev 3:19).³⁸ For Gregory Beale, the invitation of the risen Lord is not for conversion, but for a renewed relationship to Christ.³⁹ This interpretation has ancient antecedents. In his *Homilies on the Psalms* 9 (on Psalm 75), Jerome quotes Rev 3:20 and then comments:⁴⁰

Every day, Christ stands at the door of our hearts. He longs to enter. Let us open wide our hearts to him. Then he will come in and be our host and guest. He will live in us and eat with us.

³⁴ On the messianic banquet (in chronological order), see Paul Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1934) 388–89, “Die Speise der Seligen”; Dennis E. Smith, “The Messianic Banquet Reconsidered,” *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, ed. Birger Pearson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991) 64–73; *idem*, “Messianic Banquet,” *ABD*, 4.788–791; J. Priest, “A Note on the Messianic Banquet,” *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 222–38.

³⁵ E. Isaac (trans.), “1 Enoch,” *OTP*, 1.44.

³⁶ Ladd, *Revelation*, 67.

³⁷ Ladd, *Revelation*, Charles, *Revelation*, 1.101 Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, 4 vols. (London: Rivingtons and Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1861) 1.590–91; Buchanan, *The Book of Revelation*, 123–24.

³⁸ Ladd, *Revelation*, 68.

³⁹ Beale, *Revelation*, 308.

⁴⁰ William C. Weinrich (ed.), *Revelation* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament, 12; Downer’s Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 54.

Shortly after the time Oecumenius, Andreas of Caesarea wrote an extensive commentary on the Apocalypse in which he offers the following interpretation of Rev 3:20: "My coming is without violence, he says, I knock at the door of the heart [τὴν θύραν τῆς καρδίας]."⁴¹ Similarly, the Venerable Bede (ca. 673–735 CE) makes the following comment (*Homilies on the Gospels* 1.21):⁴²

The Lord stands at the doorway and knocks when he pours into our heart the memory of his will, either through the mouth of a man who is teaching [us] or through his own internal inspiration. . . . He comes in order to eat with us and we with him. For he dwells in the hearts of his elect through the fact of his love in order to restore them always by the light of his presence.

According to Timothy Wiarda, Jesus seeking entry into the human heart is the most common modern understanding of Rev 3:20.⁴³ While interpreting Rev 3:20 as an allegory of Jesus seeking entry into the human heart has been frequently used in homiletical contexts since the time of Jerome, this view has particular resonance with modern evangelical commentators. Simon J. Kistemaker, understands the scene to refer to the Lord rapping on the door of each individual's heart as a call to repentance (supported by the concluding phrase of the preceding verse, Rev 3:19: "Be earnest, therefore, and repent").⁴⁴ The dining metaphor refers to communion with Christ and only hints at the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the wedding feast at his return.⁴⁵ Similarly, Grant R. Osborne maintains, on the one hand, that this verse has been often misunderstood as an evangelistic call, but then makes this statement about opening the door to Christ (apparently distinguishing literal from spiritual exegesis): "Spiritually, this denotes a call to repentance and the believer's response in getting right with Christ."⁴⁶

Accordingly, Rev 3:20, with its well-known image of Christ knocking at the door, was the subject of a number of paintings and poems in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A widely popular allegorical version of this scene was made during the Victorian period called "The Light of the World" by the popular English artist William Holman Hunt

⁴¹ English translation: *Commentary on the Apocalypse: Andrew of Caesarea*, trans. Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011).

⁴² Weinrich, *Revelation*, 55.

⁴³ Timothy Wiarda, "Revelation 3:20: Imagery and Literary Context," *JETS* 38 (1995) 203.

⁴⁴ Simon J. Kistemaker, *Revelation* (New Testament commentary; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001) 174–75.

⁴⁵ Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 175.

⁴⁶ Osborne, *Revelation*, 212–13.

(1827–1910),⁴⁷ in three different paintings. The earliest version (1851–53) hangs in Keble College, Oxford; the second, a copy of the first, was painted between 1853 and 1957 by Hunt and Frederick George Stephens (1828–1907), whom Hunt tutored; the third and final version was done by the increasingly infirm Hunt and Edward Robert Hughes (1851–1914) between 1900 and 1904. Following a world tour, during which the final version was viewed by an estimated seven million people, the painting was permanently hung in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The door depicted in the first painting has no handle and Hunt interpreted it to mean “the obstinately shut mind,” part of an elaborate allegorical interpretation of the first version of the painting:⁴⁸

The closed door was the obstinately shut mind, the weeds the cumber of daily neglect, the accumulated hindrances of sloth; the orchard the garden of delectable fruit for the dainty feast of the soul. The music of the still small voice was the summons to the sluggard to awaken and become a zealous labourer under the Divine Master; the bat flitting about only in darkness was a natural symbol of ignorance; the kingly and priestly dress of Christ, the sign of His reign over the body and the soul, to them who could give their allegiance to Him and acknowledge God's overrule. In making it a night scene, lit mainly by the lantern carried by Christ, I had followed metaphorical explanation in the Psalms, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,' with also the accordant allusions by St. Paul to the sleeping soul, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”

The Victorian image of Jesus knocking on the door of the heart based on Rev 3:20 was made famous through Hunt's paintings, but as we have seen, he was far from the first or the last to interpret the passage in an individualizing allegorical manner. The American artist Warner Sallman (1892–1968) is known primarily for his enormously popular “The Head of Christ” (1941), which has sold over 500 million copies. He is also well-known for his second most popular painting, “Christ at Heart's Door” (with the title signaling allegorical interpretation), which dramatizes Rev 3:20: a handsome, Gentile-looking wears a luminescent white robe and knocks on a door without an external latch or handle and with thistles on the right and left sides of the door (features derived from Hunt). For American Evangelicals, this painting functions as an allegory for the conversion experience. Sallman was dependent on a long tradition of English

⁴⁷ Holman Hunt and two other artists (John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti) formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848.

⁴⁸ William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (London: Macmillan, 1905) 1:350–51.

and German allegorical depictions of Rev 3:20, of which the most famous was that of Holman Hunt.

THE RELEVANCE OF GRAECO-EGYPTIAN CULTIC MEAL
AND DIVINATION TEXTS

Two types of sacral meals from Greco-Roman religious practice suggest themselves as possible parallels to Rev 3:20. The first type is reflected in the numerous papyrus invitations to the κλίνη of Sarapis (κλίνη literally means “couch,” but with the connotation “dinner at which one reclines to eat”). The invitations to attend a dinner with the god Sarapis, of which thirteen have now been discovered (the thirteenth invitation is POxy 3693, where the editor provides references to the other twelve).⁴⁹ Almost all the invitations were issued under the name of a particular host. PKöln 57, however, is an exception:⁵⁰ “The god calls you to a banquet being held in the Thoereion tomorrow from the 9th hour.” This invitation implies that the god himself will be *present* at the banquet, an implication confirmed by both terra-cotta statuettes and numismatic depictions of a reclining Sarapis.⁵¹ Judging by the size of the banquet rooms in excavated sanctuaries, approximately seven to ten persons could be present.⁵² Though such banquets apparently had little to do with revelatory divination, they do reveal an ancient conception of one type of relationship between worshipers and deities that provides a possible background for understanding early Christian problems regarding the eating sacrificial meat (a taboo of particular concern elsewhere in Revelation, e.g., Rev 2:14, 20). A different type of invitation is represented by those preserved in connection with the cult of Zeus Panamaros, attested from the second century BCE to the fourth century CE, though most of the inscriptions date from the second

⁴⁹ A helpful discussion of these texts is found in G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1976* (North Ryde: Macquarie University; The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1981) 5–9 (at that point eleven such invitations were known).

⁵⁰ Translation in Horsley, *New Documents*, 5.

⁵¹ J.F. Gilliam, “Invitations to the Kline of Sarapis,” *Collectanea Papyrologica: Texts Published in Honor of H.C. Youtie*, ed. A.E. Hanson (Bonn: Habelt, 1976) 317; D. Gill, “Trapezomata: A Neglected Aspect of Greek Sacrifice,” *HTR* 67 (1974) 117–37; the latter discusses *τραπεζώματα*, i.e., offerings to a deity placed on a sacrificial table for a meal at which the god was regarded as present in the midst of the worshippers.

⁵² E. Will, “Banquets et salles de banquet dans le cultes de la Grece et de l’Empire romain,” *Mélanges d’histoire et d’archaeologie offerts à Paul Collart*, ed. P. Ducrey (Lausanne: Bibliotheque Historique Vaudoise, 1976) 353–62.

century CE.⁵³ The god himself is depicted as hosting the meals.⁵⁴ A similar type of Roman sacrificial meal is the *lectisternia*, a funerary meal eaten in the presence of the deified dead, represented by statues and busts of the deceased.⁵⁵

A second type of sacral meal was prepared by Greco-Egyptian ritual practitioners, either to attract and establish a perpetual bond with a πάρεδρος δαίμων ("assisting god"), or as part of the ritual procedure for summoning a god or δαίμων for (among other things) purposes of divination. These meals provided the setting for an appearance of a supernatural revealer and the texts which describe such meals constitute an untapped source for understanding the significance of Rev 3:20. A πάρεδρος δαίμων is a deity, usually minor, which a ritual practitioner thought to secure as a lifelong companion and servant, who could provide him with a variety of services. *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (PGM) I.96–131 contains a lengthy list of such services:⁵⁶

If you give him a command, straightway he performs the task; he sends dreams, he brings women, men without the use of magical material, he kills, he destroys, he stirs up winds from the earth, he carries gold, silver, bronze, and gives them to you whenever the need arises. And he frees from bonds a person chained in prison, he opens doors, he causes invisibility so that no one can see you at all, he is a bringer of fire, he brings water, wine, bread and [whatever] you wish in the way of foods.

An important feature of the πάρεδρος δαίμων is his role as a prophetic or oracular medium, attested in PGM I.173–77:

He will tell you what things will happen both when and at what time of the night or day. And if anyone asks you "What do I have in mind?" or "What has happened to me?" or even "What is going to happen?," question the messenger [ἄγγελος] and he will tell you in silence. But you speak to the one who questions you as if from yourself.

⁵³ The inscriptions are collected in J. Hatzfeld, "Inscriptions de Panamara," *BCH* 51 (1927) 57–122 and also in *SEG* 4.247–61.

⁵⁴ *SEG* 4.247.2; 250.2.

⁵⁵ Servius on Vergil *Aeneid* 10.76; Livy *History* 5.13.5–8; Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 1.63.

⁵⁶ Translation in Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells* (2nd ed.; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 5; the Greek text and German translation is available in Karl Preisendanz and Albert Henrichs (eds.), *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1973–74) 1.8.

A πάρεδρος δαίμων is a type of divine being, for historically the Greeks used the terms δαίμων and θεός interchangeably,⁵⁷ and the terms δαίμων, θεός and ἄγγελος are also used interchangeably in the Greek magical papyri.⁵⁸ The ritual procedures for enlisting the services of such a δαίμων have a relatively consistent morphology.⁵⁹ *PGM* I.1–42 is an example of a this type of ritual procedure whose purpose is summarized in the introductory sequence (I.1–3):⁶⁰ “A [δαίμων] comes as an assistant [παρεδρικῶς] who will reveal everything to you clearly and will be your [companion and] will eat and sleep with you.” Procedures for recruiting a personal πάρεδρος δαίμων consist of the following elements: (1) Preliminary preparations (purification, e.g., abstention from sexual intercourse [I.41–42] is required). (2) A sacrificial ritual (πράξις) is performed. (3) An invocation or epiclesis (ἐπὶ δῆ) is given. (4) The god or δαίμων “enters in.” (5) The god or δαίμων is formally greeted by the practitioner. (6) The practitioner asks the name of the god or δαίμων, knowledge of which is necessary for future invocations (*PGM* I.160–61, 167; XIII.210–11; *PDM* xiv.60ff.). (7) The ritual practitioner reclines and dines with the god or δαίμων (*PGM* I.37–38, 84–87, 168–70; IV.1859–60; XII.20–23). (8) The god or δαίμων is asked questions by the practitioner and answers them. (9) The god or δαίμων is temporarily dismissed by the practitioner.

A πάρεδρος δαίμων is typically granted immediate tenure by the practitioner (*PGM* I.165–66): “Be inseparable from me from this day forth through all the time of my life.” Since the πάρεδρος δαίμων is inseparable from the practitioner, he can be recalled easily whenever the practitioner so desires (*PGM* I.88–90, 181–88). Procedures for the purpose of invoking a supernatural revealer are very similar in structure and often involve sharing a ritual meal with the god or δαίμων (*PDM* xiv.55ff.) as well as the use of a ritual throne or tripod (the traditional throne of Apollo) for his epiphany (throne: *PGM* I.332–33; V.31–35; tripod: *PGM* III. 192–93, 291–95; IV.3197ff.; XIII.104ff.). The significance of the throne as a place for a revelatory epiphany has been discussed in some detail by Erik Peterson, who finds the conceptual world of Hellenistic ritual divination reflected in

⁵⁷ A. Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1908) 253–57.

⁵⁸ *PGM* I, which contains several procedures for acquiring a πάρεδρος δαίμων, equates the phrase with θεός (lines 40, 77, 86, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93), with ἄγγελος (lines 76, 78, 87, 172, 176) and with πνεῦμα ἄεριον, “aerial spirit” (line 97).

⁵⁹ Ritual procedures for enlisting the services of a πάρεδρος δαίμων include *PGM* I.1–42, 42–95, 96–195, IV.1840–70, XIa.1–40; XII.14–95.

⁶⁰ Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, 3.

Hermas *Vis.* 1.2.2; 3.1.4.⁶¹ Like the throne or tripod, the table prepared for the deity could also function as a place of epiphany. Sometimes an image of the expected deity was placed on the table along with the meal (*PGM* IV.1859–60; XII.18–20). The sacral meal tended to focus on bread and wine, but could also include incense, spices, fruits and flowers. The function of the meal, never explicitly discussed in the texts, appears to be that of establishing a permanent bond between the worship and the πάρεδρος δαίμων through the sharing of food (the most common way of establishing a sacred bond in the ancient Near East to the present day). These various procedures for recruiting a πάρεδρος δαίμων or summoning a revealer commonly took place in the privacy of the practitioner's home (a priest or temple servant could use a temple, or part of a temple, from which the public was excluded; a poor man could use lonely places outside the city); all that was necessary was a solitary place where a meal could be set out.⁶² *PGM* IV.1851–67 contains a procedure in which a πάρεδρος δαίμων is used in a love ritual, with some features strikingly similar to Rev 3:20:

Go late at night to the house [of the woman] you want, knock on her door with the Eros and say: "Lo she NN resides here; wherefore stand beside her and, after assuming the likeness of the god or δαίμων she worships, say what I propose." And go to your home, set the table, spread a pure linen cloth, and seasonal flowers, and set the figure upon it. Then make a burnt offering to it and continuously say the spell of invocation. And send him, and he will act without fail.

Here the smitten practitioner carries an image of the god Eros (his πάρεδρος δαίμων) to the house of his beloved, where he knocks on the door. The god is asked to assume the identity of the deity to whom the woman is devoted, stand beside her as she sleeps, and speak to her either through a vision or a dream.

Rev 3:20 maybe compared to another passage in early Christian apocalyptic literature with stronger ties to the conceptual world of ritual divination, Hermas *Vis.* 5.1:

While I was praying at home and sitting on my dining couch [καθίσαντος εἰς τὴν κλίνην], there entered [εἰσῆλθεν] a man glorious to look on, in the dress of a shepherd, covered with a white goatskin, with a bag on his shoulders and a staff in his hand. And he greeting me, and I greeted him back. And

⁶¹ Erik Peterson, "Beiträge zur Interpretation der Visionen im Pastor Hermas," *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* (Rome, Freiburg and Vienna: Herder, 1959) 254–70.

⁶² *PGM* I.84; III.334; IV.59, 2041, 2374; VII.54; XIII.6, 8; XXXVIII.5; LXXVIII.1; XCIII.15; *PGM* xii.70, 90; xiv.340, 780.

at once he sat down by me, and said to me, I have been sent by the most revered angel to dwell with you the rest of the days of your life.

Erik Peterson has shown the numerous links between this passage and Hellenistic ritual revelation, including sitting as the posture for receiving revelation, the use of the verb εἰσερχεσθαι ("to enter in"), and the greeting of the revealer.⁶³ However, Peterson does not mention the correspondence between the permanent relation established between Hermas and the Shepherd, which is strikingly similar to that between the ritual practitioner and the πάρεδρος δαίμων. Further, there are no philological obstacles against translating the phrase καθίσαντος εἰς τὴν κλίνην as "sitting on the dining couch," i.e., Hermas was eating when the Shepherd appeared to him. This and other passages in Hermas reveal that Hellenistic ritual divination has had a positive influence on the author's conception of the praxis revelation procedures. The currency of associating πάρεδροι δαίμονες as revelatory mediators in Greco-Roman revelatory divination meant that early Christian leaders tended to categorize deviant forms of Christian prophecy in terms of the possession of a personal prophetic spirit or δαίμων (early Christian authors commonly equated magic and Greco-Roman religion and always used the term δαίμων of evil supernatural beings).

CONCLUSION

Against the background of Graeco-Roman conceptions of dining with deities and Graeco-Egyptian revelatory divination, Rev 3:20 needs to be interpreted neither eschatologically (i.e., the appearance of Christ at the door understood as a metaphor for the Parousia) nor individualistically as a summons to repentance or conversion (Christ knocks at the door of the heart). As a Christian text, however, it reveals some features not totally compatible with its present literary setting. The door upon which the risen Jesus knocks must be that of the worshiper's home. Christian homes were commonly used as gathering places for worship, yet in this passage it appears that only a *single individual* is involved, not a congregation. In that respect the saying still reflects the imagery of private ritual practices. The verb John used for the entry of the risen Jesus, εἰσερχεσθαι

⁶³ Erik Peterson, "Kritische Analyse der fünften Vision," *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* (Rome, Freiburg and Vienna: Herder, 1959) 271–76. See also PGM I.327; IV.1002, 1007, 1015, 1019, 1023, 1030, 1045, 1121, 3220; VII.1014; XIII.12, 210, 608; LXII.34.

("to enter in"), is a commonplace term for entry, yet can also be a *terminus technicus* for the entry of a summoned god or δαίμων in the language of Greco-Roman ritual divination.⁶⁴ The meal to be shared by Jesus and the worshiper may be construed as the Eucharist, but is probably a meal intended to be shared only by two, the exalted Jesus and the worshiper and which functions as a means bonding the two together through table fellowship. Taken together, these parallels suggest that the imagery of Rev 3:20 is compatible with the conceptual world of Hellenistic ritual divination. In this difficult passage, however, it is not possible to argue that Rev 3:20 reflects *only* the conceptual imagery of ritual divination. Rather, it appears that the metaphorical character of the saying exhibits a polyvalent ambiguity produced by the author's combination of imagery from Jewish, Christian, Graeco-Roman and Graeco-Egyptian traditions. If Rev 3:20 can be construed as reflecting motifs associated with Hellenistic ritual divination, this is one more piece of evidence suggesting that John the Apocalyptist has turned the tables by placing the initiative completely in the hands of the risen Jesus and relegating the worshiper to the role of respondent.

⁶⁴ Peterson, "Kritische Analyse," 271–76.

THE SIBYL AND THE APOCALYPSES: GENERIC RELATIONSHIPS IN HELLENISTIC JUDAISM AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

John J. Collins

The *Sibylline Oracles* constitute a distinct genre of literature in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity. They have been dubbed “the apocalyptic of Hellenistic Diaspora Judaism” by Philip Vielhauer, but it is now generally granted that they are not apocalypses.¹ The Sibyl’s revelations are not presented as accounts of visions or of otherworldly journeys, but take the form of oracular speech. In this respect, they might be classified as prophecy rather than as apocalyptic. But it is certainly true that they differ from classical Hebrew prophecy in significant ways, and also that they have much in common with the apocalypses.²

Jane Lucy Lightfoot has recently argued that the *Sibylline Oracles*, especially book 3, can be illuminated by John Barton’s study of the transformation of prophecy in the Second Temple period.³ One feature of the age was the rise of pseudepigraphy, the attribution of revelatory (and other) writings to figures from the hoary past. This may have been a way of circumventing the belief that the age of prophecy had passed, but it also had implications for the nature of prophecy. It made possible long-range “predictions” which spanned the course of history from ancient times to the present of the real authors. Since these “predictions” were verifiably accurate, they enhanced the credibility of the things that remained to be fulfilled. Also notable were increased interest in the manner in which revelations were received, and an expansion of the range of revealed things, including ethical instruction. In all of these matters, there are significant parallels between the Sibylline Oracles and the apocalypses.

¹ P. Vielhauer, “Apocalypses and Related Subjects,” in *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. E. Hennecke; rev. ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992) 2.560.

² J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (revised ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 116–118. All references to Jewish and Christian Sibylline Oracles in this essay are to J.J. Collins, “The Sibylline Oracles,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J.H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983) 1.317–472.

³ J.L. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles, with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on the First and Second Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 60. Cf. J. Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

THE PAGAN SIBYLLINA

While the oracles were indebted, quite decisively, to Jewish tradition, however, they were presented as the utterances of a figure from pagan antiquity, who had her own associations.⁴ The earliest preserved reference, in Heraclitus, refers to her as “the Sibyl, with frenzied lips, uttering words mirthless, unembellished, yet reaches to a thousand years with her voice through the god.”⁵ Presumably, Heraclitus meant that the Sibyl’s career endured for a thousand years. There is no evidence that she was ever credited with predicting the course of events over a thousand years. Only scattered examples of pagan Sibylline Oracles have survived.⁶ They are usually written in epic hexameters, like other Greek oracles. Most are brief predictions of war or natural disaster:

As for the battle on Thermodon, may I be far away from it as an eagle in the clouds and the upper air, to behold it only. The vanquished weeps, but the victor is destroyed.

There was a famous collection of Sibylline Oracles in Rome, which was consulted some 50 times between 496 and 100 BCE.⁷ The accounts of the consultations typically tell of some crisis or prodigy that provoked the consultation, and give some details of rituals prescribed by the oracles. Only one direct quotation from the Libri Sibyllini has been preserved, in the *Memorabilia* of Phlegon.⁸ It tells of the birth of an androgyne, and prescribes a list of rituals and offerings to the gods. When the Roman collection was destroyed by fire in the first century BCE, replacement oracles were collected from Erythrae and elsewhere. The enduring impression of Sibylline Oracles in the Roman world around the turn of the era can be inferred from Tibullus:

[The Sibyls] told that a comet would be the evil sign of war, and how plenty of stones would rain down on the earth. They say that trumpets have been

⁴ See the classic account of H.W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* (ed. B. McGing; London: Routledge, 1998).

⁵ Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 6 (397A).

⁶ I. Cervelli, “Questioni sibilline,” *Studi Storici* 34/4(1993) 895–1001, especially 895–934. See also Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy*, 1–22.

⁷ H. Cancik, “Libri Fatales: Römische Offenbarungsliteratur und Geschichtstheologie,” *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 549–576.

⁸ *FGH* 257F 37. L. Breglia Pulci Doria, *Oracoli Sibillini tra rituali e propaganda (Studi su Flegonte di Tralles)* (Naples: Liguori, 1983).

heard and weapons clashing in the sky, and that the groves have prophesied defeat.⁹

With the exception of the Roman Sibylline Books, which appear to have prescribed rituals, the oracles seem to have been predictions of wars, political events, or natural disasters. While these predictions might be strung together, they do not appear to constitute developed literary units. In the words of Arnaldo Momigliano, "Pagan Sibylline oracles seldom went beyond individual events; they seldom pursued what we might call the great currents of world history."¹⁰

The pagan oracles, then, are quite different from the long oracles composed by Jews and Christians. Yet, as Momigliano also remarked, "even the most determined Jew, once he had accepted to play the part of a Sibyl, had also to accept some of the preoccupations and mental pre-suppositions of a pagan Sibylline text."¹¹ In fact, a long section in *Sibylline Oracles* Book 3 (401–488), strings together a series of such predictions of destruction against various places, many of them in Asia Minor. This section of *Sib.Or.* 3 is often attributed to the Erythrean Sibyl. It would seem that these oracles were included precisely to lend an authentic Sibylline flavor to the Jewish oracles. Shorter strings of oracles of this type are also interspersed elsewhere in the Jewish Sibyllines. It should be noted that these oracles were not entirely alien to the spirit of Hebrew prophecy. Jeremiah had famously said that a true prophet was one who prophesied "war, famine and pestilence," and the biblical prophetic books also include lengthy sections of oracles against nations other than Israel.

THE JEWISH ADAPTATION

The most conspicuous differences between the Jewish Sibylline Oracles and their pagan counterparts are the lengthy exhortations put in the Sibyl's mouth and the framework of history.¹² The exhortations provide the vehicle for propaganda, which is arguably the *raison d'être* of the

⁹ Tibullus 2.5.71–80. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy*, 210.

¹⁰ A. Momigliano, "From the Pagan to the Christian Sibyl," *Nono contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1992) 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹² See my essay "The Jewish Transformation of Sibylline Oracles," in *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (JSJSup 54; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 181–97; also published in *Sibille e linguaggi oracolari* (ed. I. Chirassi Colombo and T. Seppilli; Roma: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, for the University of Macerata, 1998) 369–387.

Jewish oracles. The framework of universal history, however, with the predictions of impending divine judgment, constitutes the main point of resemblance to the apocalypses, and it is on this aspect of the oracles that I wish to focus here.

Jane Lightfoot has argued that there is a special bond between the Sibyl and Enoch, and has even suggested that the earliest Jewish Sibyllists may have drawn on the books of Enoch, although she admits that the evidence is not conclusive.¹³ Both Enoch and the Sibyl have more than mortal status. The Sibyl was granted as many years as the grains in a handful of sand, but without the gift of youth. Enoch, who had “walked with *elohim*” (God or angels) in his lifetime, was believed to have been taken up to heaven. Both are primordial figures, who are therefore in a position to “predict” events spanning the course of history. Both are associated, in different ways, with the Flood. It is therefore natural to ask whether the Sibyl’s conception of universal history is not derived from the apocalypses of Enoch, and perhaps also that of Daniel. Lightfoot looks specifically to the “Apocalypse of Weeks” in *1 Enoch* 93:1–10 + 91:11–17, where the course of history is divided into ten “weeks,” followed by “many weeks without number.” Whether this Enochic text can be singled out as the source for the Sibylline conception of history, however, is open to question.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY IN THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES

At this point it will be helpful to review the development of the Jewish Sibylline tradition, and specifically the development in the Sibylline treatment of history. Most scholars regard the core of *Sib.Or.* 3 as the oldest Jewish Sibylline Oracles. By the core I mean *Sib.Or.* 3:97–349 and 489–829.¹⁴ These oracles are dated to the mid-second century BCE by recurring references to the reign of the seventh king of Egypt of the line of the Greeks.¹⁵ It

¹³ Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 70–77.

¹⁴ The distinction of this core has been disputed in different ways by E. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism. The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998) 271–283, and R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and its Social Setting* (SVTP 17; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 126–130. I have responded to their arguments in “The Third Sibyl Revisited,” in my book, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture* (JSJSup 100; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 82–98.

¹⁵ Collins, “The Third Sibyl Revisited,” 87–94, against the argument of Gruen that the number seven is symbolic and “mystical,” therefore without specific reference (Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 277). On the use of numerical symbolism in apocalyptic literature see A. Yarbro Collins, “Numerical Symbolism in Jewish and Early Christian Literature,” in

is agreed that *Sib.Or.* 3:1–96 belong to the lost second book of the original collection, while vv. 350–488 are a collection of oracles of diverse origin against various places. Some of this material dates to the Roman period.¹⁶ It is the core oracles, in any case, that address the broader sweep of history in *Sib.Or.* 3.

The core material may be divided into five oracles: vss. 93–161; 162–195; 196–294; 295–349; and 489–829.¹⁷ The greatest sweep of universal history is found in vv. 93–161, which begins with the tower of Babel, and continues with a euhemeristic account of the Titans. It concludes with a list of kingdoms: “then as time pursued its cyclic course the kingdom of Egypt arose, then that of the Persians, Medes, and Ethiopians, and Assyrian Babylon, then that of the Macedonians, of Egypt again, then of Rome.” The concluding reference to Rome might suggest a date after the battle of Actium in 31 BCE, but the passage dealing with the tower of Babel was paraphrased by Alexander Polyhistor in the mid first century BCE. The sibyllist could have recognized Rome as a world power already in the second century BCE, but it is not certain that vv. 93–161 constitute a literary unit. Either the passage on the tower or the list of kingdoms could have been composed separately. The passage on the tower is presumably based on Genesis. The account of the Titans is probably derived from Hesiod’s *Theogony*, although it differs in details and in the euhemeristic interpretation. History between primeval times and the present is condensed into the list of kingdoms. This list is exceptional in several respects. The number of kingdoms, eight, does not fit any established schema, apocalyptic or other. While the concluding sequence (Macedonia, Egypt, Rome) is obviously historical, the sequence of Persians, Medes, Ethiopians and “Assyrian Babylon” makes no historical sense, and seems to be a rather random listing of the great powers known to the author. The only similarity to the apocalypses here lies in the idea that it was possible for the Sibyl to offer a synthetic view spanning all of history. The listing of world kingdoms is reminiscent of Daniel rather than of Enoch, but the idea that world kingship passed to various powers in succession was widely known in the Hellenistic world, beginning with Herodotus.

her *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Early Christian Apocalypticism* (JSJSup 50; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 57–89.

¹⁶ For a full analysis see my book, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism* (SBLDS 13; Missoula, Montana: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974) 21–71.

¹⁷ I accept Buitenwerf’s analysis of the units, except that I do not regard vv. 350–488 as part of the original core. See Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 137–300.

The oracle in *Sib.Or.* 3:162–195 also asks “how many kingdoms of men shall be raised up?” (166). In this case “the house of Solomon” is listed first, followed by a random conglomeration of Phoenicians, Pamphylians, Persians, Phrygians, Carians, Mysians, and Lydians, of whom only the Persians could reasonably be said to have enjoyed world empire. Here again the picture clarifies in the Hellenistic period. First, a “great, diverse, race of Macedonia” will rule. Then (vs. 175) “will be the beginning of another kingdom, white, and many-headed from the western sea.” The reference is obviously to Rome, but not to the triumph of Octavian. Rather, Rome is said to “cut up everything . . . in many places, but especially in Macedonia” (190). Macedonia was divided after the battle of Pydna in 168 BCE and was made a Roman province in 147 BCE. This is also the period suggested by the reference to “the seventh reign, when a king of Egypt, who will be of the Greeks by race, will rule” in vs. 193. After that, “the people of the great God will again be strong” (194).

Here again there is a general similarity to the apocalypses insofar as the Sibyl claims to predict the whole course of history. Again, the analogy is with Daniel rather than Enoch, in view of the focus on world kingdoms. But interest in world kingdoms was not peculiar to Daniel or Jewish apocalypticism. The Sibyl seems to be trying to integrate Judean history (beginning with Solomon, and ending with the restoration of the people of God) into a sequence of world kingdoms. The conclusion envisioned to this sequence is the restoration of “the people of God,” perhaps to its Solomonic glory. There is no suggestion of an apocalyptic finale, with cosmic judgment or resurrection of the dead.

Sib.Or. 3:196 to 294 addresses the question, “what first, what next, what will be the final evil on all men?” (197). The first evils, we are told, will befall the Titans. Then assorted evils will befall Greeks, Phrygians, Persians, Assyrians Egyptians, Libyans, Ethiopians, Carians and Pamphylians. The main concern of this oracle, however, is with “the pious men who live around the great temple of Solomon.” The Sibyl digresses to eulogize this people, and summarize the story of the Exodus. It goes on to describe the Exodus, and the destruction of the temple. Eventually “the heavenly God will send a king” (286). Most probably, Cyrus of Persia is meant. This oracle ends with the restoration of the temple “as it was before.” Apart from the initial reference to the Titans, this oracle is a summary of biblical history down to the restoration after the Babylonian exile.

Sib.Or. 3:295–349 is part of a longer oracle that goes up to v. 488, and that consists of oracles against various places. Vv. 350–380 are an oracle against Rome from the first century BCE. Vv. 381–488 seem to be generic

Sibylline Oracles, and are sometimes attributed to the Erythrean Sibyl. Regardless of how we define the extent of this oracle, however, it contains no overview of universal history.

The last section of the book, on Buitenwerf's analysis, runs from verse 489 to 829. Buitenwerf distinguishes four admonitions within it, each of which begins with direct address: 545–623; 624–731; 732–61 and 762–808.¹⁸ (Vv. 809–829 constitute a conclusion by the Sibyl in which she identifies herself as the daughter-in-law of Noah). None of these oracles provides an overview of universal history such as we found in the earlier sections of the book, but they include several passages that are eschatological in character.

Vv. 545–623 begin with oracles of destruction against various places, followed by an appeal to the Greeks to worship the true God by sending offerings to his temple, and a eulogy of the Jews (573–600). They conclude with a prophecy of divine judgment on humanity as punishment for idolatry. This will happen “whenever the young seventh king of Egypt rules his own land, numbered from the dynasty of the Greeks” (608–9), and will involve an invasion of Egypt by a king from Asia. Then:

God will give great joy to men
for earth and trees and countless flocks of sheep
will give to men the true fruit
of wine, sweet honey and white milk
and corn, which is best of all for mortals (619–23).

Sib.Or. 3.624–731 begins with an appeal to the Greeks to sacrifice to the true God. Then it describes a period of great upheaval (“king will lay hold of king and take away territory”). Then “God will send a king from the sun, who will stop the entire earth from evil war” (652–653). The identity of this figure need not concern us here. I have argued elsewhere that the reference is to a Ptolemaic king rather than to a Judean messiah.¹⁹ But the cessation of war is not final. Vss. 657–608 describe an attack by the kings of the earth on Jerusalem and its temple. They will be destroyed by divine judgment. But then “the sons of the great God will all live peacefully around the temple, rejoicing in these things which the creator, just judge and sole ruler, will give” (702–704).

¹⁸ Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 236–300.

¹⁹ See my essay, “The Sibyl and the Potter: Political Propaganda in Ptolemaic Egypt,” in *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages*, 199–210.

732–761 again begins with an appeal to the Greeks, and then proceeds to the divine judgment, followed by the transformation of the earth and universal peace.

Finally, in 762–808 we are told that God will raise up a kingdom for all ages. The “maiden” Jerusalem is told to rejoice, for

... he will dwell in you. You will have immortal light.
 Wolves and lambs will eat grass together in the mountains.
 Leopards will feed together with kids.
 Roving bears will spend the night with calves.
 The flesh-eating lion will eat husks at the manger
 like an ox, and mere infant children will lead them
 with ropes. For he will make the beasts on earth harmless.
 Serpents and asps will sleep with babies
 and will not harm them, for the hand of God will be upon them. (*Sib.Or.*
 3.785–795).

The oracle concludes with the signs of the end, and an admonition to sacrifice to the true God.

There are parallels to the eschatological scenario found in these oracles in some apocalyptic texts, such as 4 *Ezra*, from the late first century CE, which also has elaborate signs of the end and an assault by the nations on Mt. Zion. The motif of the attack on Mt. Zion has old biblical roots, however, as can be seen in Psalms 2 and 48. The final outcome of the eschatological conflict in *Sib.Or.* 3.785–795 is clearly modeled on Isaiah 11.

Conspicuously absent here is any role for angelic powers, and any mention of resurrection or judgment after death, the distinctive trademarks of apocalyptic literature in the books of Enoch and Daniel. In the Sibyl's retelling of primeval history, there is no place for the descent of the “sons of God” or Watchers before the Flood, although they could have been related to the Titans, and are in fact accommodated in the later Sibylline Books 1 and 2 (*Sib.Or.* 1.87–104). So despite the common use of pseudepigraphy and long-term prophecy, *Sib.Or.* 3 does not exhibit an apocalyptic worldview. There is no reason to suppose that the Sibyl was influenced by the books of *Enoch*. There is one allusion to the Book of Daniel in *Sib.Or.* 3.396–400, which speaks of ten horns and a horn growing on the side (cf. Dan 7:7–8). The reference is to the descendants of Alexander, most probably the Syrian kings in the second century BCE. The provenance of this oracle is uncertain. It at least raises the possibility that the Jewish sibyllist of the second century BCE knew the Book of Daniel. But the Sibyl did not adopt either Daniel's view of the sequence of world kingdoms or his view of the end of history and the resurrection of the dead.

WORLD KINGDOMS

It is true, however, that one of the major concerns of *Sib.Or.* 3 is paralleled in the Book of Daniel. This is the succession of world kingdoms. But this motif too had deeper roots. The earliest account of a succession of world empires is found in Herodotus: "the Assyrians had held the empire of upper Asia for the space of 520 years, when the Medes set the example of revolt from their authority." Later, "the Medes were brought under the rule of the Persians."²⁰ Herodotus claimed to be following "Persian authorities," and the inclusion of the Medes would seem to reflect a Persian perspective. Ctesias, who wrote in the early fourth century BCE, and had been court physician to Artaxerxes II, has the same sequence.²¹ According to Ktesias, Assyria had held a true world empire, from India to Egypt, and it was taken over first by Media and then by Persia. The sequence Assyria-Media is attested in the Jewish book of Tobit (14:4) where there is no apparent Hellenistic influence.²² The sequence of Assyrians, Medes and Persians also appears in T. Naphtali 5:8, in a list where the last people mentioned are the Syrians. It has been suggested that the "three-kingdom" sequence of Assyria, Media, and Persia is the official Achaemenid view of history, intended to establish the legitimacy of Persia as the heir to the earlier empires of the Near East.²³ It must be admitted, however, that this motif is never attested in Persian inscriptions, and so its role as Persian ideology remains hypothetical.²⁴

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the sequence of kingdoms is extended. Most probably, the inclusion of the Greek empire originated in the Seleucid kingdom.²⁵ Eventually, the sequence was extended to include

²⁰ Herodotus, 1.95, 1.130.

²¹ According to Diodorus Siculus, 2.1–34.

²² J.C.H. Lebram, "Die Weltreiche in der jüdischen Apokalypitik: Bemerkungen zu Tob. 14:4–7," *ZAW* 76 (1964) 328–331.

²³ R.G. Kratz, *Translatio Imperii: Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologischgeschichtlichen Umfeld*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 198–212; K. Koch, *Europa, Rom und der Kaiser vor dem Hintergrund von zwei Jahrtausenden Rezeption des Buches Daniel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 13.

²⁴ J. Wiesehöfer, "Daniel, Herodot und 'Darius der Meder': Auch ein Beitrag zur Idee der Abfolge von Weltreichen," in *Von Sumer bis Homer: Festschrift für Manfred Schretter zum 60. Geburtstag*. (AOAT 325; ed. R. Rolliger, Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005) 647–653.

²⁵ J. Wiesehöfer, "Vom 'oberen Asien' zur gesamten bewohnten Welt: Die hellenistische-römische Weltreiche-Theorie," in *Europa, Tausendjähriges Reich und Neue Welt: Zwei Jahrtausende Geschichte und Utopie in der Rezeption des Danielbuches* (ed. M. Delgado, K. Koch and E. Marsch; Freiburg Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 2003) 66–83.

Rome. A fragment of one Aemilius Sura, preserved in Velleius Paterculus, who wrote about the turn of the era, reads:

The Assyrians were the first of all races to hold power, then the Medes, after them the Persians, and then the Macedonians. Then when the two kings, Philip and Antiochus, of Macedonian origin, had been completely conquered, soon after the overthrow of Carthage, the supreme command passed to the Roman people.²⁶

The same sequence, with Rome as the fifth empire, is found in Polybius (38.22) from the late second century BCE, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1.2.2–4), about 10 BCE; Tacitus (*Hist* 5.8–9), about 100 CE, and Appian (Preface, 9) about 140 CE. The Book of Daniel evidently adapted the pre-Roman sequence by substituting Babylon for Assyria, in light of the impact of Babylon on Jewish history.²⁷ The fact that Daniel makes a place for the Medes, who had never conquered Israel or Judah, shows its indebtedness to the traditional schema. It should be noted that the sequence of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Macedonia, is found in the Babylonian Dynastic Prophecy, which, like the Sibyl and the apocalypses, is a long-term prophecy of the course of history, and which has been construed as anti-Macedonian.²⁸ The Babylonian text, however, does not thematize the succession of kingdoms in the same way as the Greek and Roman texts.

Sib.Or. 3 does not attest the schema of four kingdoms, followed by a definitive fifth one, as we might have expected if it were influenced by the Book of Daniel. It does, however, speak of a succession of kingdoms, and includes a Median kingdom in some lists. I would suggest that the Sibyl does not derive this interest in the succession of kingdoms from Jewish apocalyptic literature, but from Greek historiography. It should be noted that the oracles that address the succession of kingdoms in *Sib.Or.* 3 do not have eschatological conclusions. The succession of kingdoms is given

²⁶ J.W. Swain, "The Theory of the Four Monarchies: Opposition History under the Roman Empire," *CP* 35 (1940) 2.

²⁷ It is disputed whether there was already an anti-Hellenistic use of the sequence, predicting the overthrow of the fourth kingdom, before Daniel. The anti-Hellenistic use was hypothesized by Swain, "The Theory of the Four Monarchies," and popularized by S.K. Eddy, *The King is Dead. Studies in Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1961) 19–20. Wiesehöfer, "Vom 'oberen Asien,'" 68–69, is dismissive of this idea, on the grounds that there is little evidence of anti-Hellenistic resistance outside of Judea.

²⁸ A.K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1975) 24–37.

a more apocalyptic cast in *Sib.Or.* 4 and *Sib.Or.* 1–2, but this does not seem to be the case in the earliest Jewish Sibylline Oracles.

SIBYLLINE ORACLE 4

The *Fourth Sibylline Oracle* includes an extensive “prophecy” of the sequence of world kingdoms. First, the Assyrians will rule for six generations, beginning from the time of the Flood. Then the Medes will have two generations, the Persians one. When “the race of men comes to the tenth generation” the kingdom will pass to the Macedonians. But this again will be followed by Roman rule, and Rome too will be subject to the wrath of God, “because they will destroy the blameless tribe of the pious” (136). Finally, the Sibyl warns that if humanity does not change its ways, and practice washing “in perennial rivers” as a sign of repentance, God will destroy the whole world by fire. The conflagration, however, will be followed by resurrection and judgment. The resurrection has a physical character, involving the bones of the dead. Sinners will be condemned to Tartarus but the righteous “will live on earth again” (188).

The *Fourth Sibylline Oracle*, as we have it, dates to the time after the destruction of Jerusalem. It mentions the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius (130–2), which it takes to be a sign that the divine judgment is imminent. It has been argued, however, that the prophecy of the course of history, divided into four kingdoms and ten generations is an older oracle, from the early Hellenistic period.²⁹ In Daniel, the fourth numbered kingdom is followed by the kingdom of God. The tenth generation normally marks the end of history in sibylline prophecy.³⁰ In *Sib.Or.* 4, the rule of Rome is not integrated into the numerical sequence, and neither is it a definitive, eschatological kingdom. The suspicion arises that it has been inserted here to update an older oracle. It is possible that the Jewish sibyllist was familiar with a form of the schema that had Rome as the definitive, fifth kingdom, but subverted that schema by prophesying that that it too would be subject to divine judgment. It is unusual, however, to have history extended beyond the tenth generation, and so it is likely that the

²⁹ D. Flusser, “The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the *Book of Daniel*,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972) 148–175 (152); J.J. Collins, “The Place of the Fourth Sibyl in the Development of the Jewish Sibyllina,” *JJS* 25 (1974) 365–380.

³⁰ Compare *Sib.Or.* 2.15; 8.199.

Sibyl is updating an older, pre-Roman oracle. Little can be said, however, about the provenance of that older oracle.

Even if we do not posit an older oracle from the Hellenistic period, however, *Sib.Or.* 4 is quite likely to be the oldest attestation of the ten generation schema in the Jewish sibylline tradition. The motif was certainly not original here. Jane Lightfoot looks to the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, for a model.³¹ It is clear that the Sibyl did not derive the four kingdom schema from Daniel, since Assyria rather than Babylon is cast as the first kingdom. Lightfoot's concern, however, is primarily with the schema of ten generations. She looks for a model to the Enochic "Apocalypse of Weeks" (1 *Enoch* 93:1–10 + 91:12–17), where history is divided into ten "weeks," followed by "many weeks without number." We may note that in the Hebrew *Melchizedek Scroll* from Qumran, the Day of Expiation is at the end of the tenth jubilee (11Q Melch ii 7). The *Melchizedek Scroll* is certainly influenced by the jubilee theology of Leviticus 25–6, and also by the reinterpretation of Jeremiah's prophecy as 70 weeks of years in Daniel 9. None of these texts equate the ten generations with kingdoms. It should be noted the eschatological scenario envisioned by the Sibyl (a conflagration, followed by resurrection), is quite different from what we find in the "Apocalypse of Weeks."

Other possible backgrounds for the motif of ten generations have been proposed. Most intriguing here is the reference to the "*ultima aetas*" of the "Cumea" (presumably the Cumean Sibyl) in Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue*. A commentary on the *Fourth Eclogue* by Servius, a pagan grammarian, about 400 CE, claims that the Cumean Sibyl divided the *saecula* according to metals and said who would rule over each.³² The last *saeculum* would be the tenth, and would be ruled by the Sun or Apollo. No such Sibylline oracle is known, although it is often supposed that Virgil must have known one.³³ It seems, at least, that speculation about an "*ultima aetas*" could be credibly associated with the Sibyl in Virgil's time, although this did not necessarily entail a ten-fold division of history, as Servius assumed. It is possible, but

³¹ Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 111–113.

³² G. Thilo, ed., *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica Comentarii* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887) 44–45; Flusser, "The Four Empires," 163.

³³ G. Jachmann, "Die Vierte Ekloge Vergils," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 21 (1953) 13–62; A. Kurfess, "Vergils Vierte Ekloge und die *Oracula Sibyllina*," *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres Gesellschaft* 73 (1956) 121–122; R.G.M. Nisbet, "Virgil's Fourth Eclogue: Easterners and Westerners," *Bulletin of the Institute for Classical Studies* 25 (1978) 59–78; Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Oracles*, 146–147. Parke attributes the absence of such an oracle from our collection to "the fluidity of the Sibylline tradition."

not demonstrable, that this association was derived from Jewish Sibylline texts. The division of history into *saecula* had a native Italian background in Etruscan tradition.³⁴ Virgil may have cited the Sibyl as the authority on all things pertaining to the future.³⁵ Virgil says nothing about a conflagration or resurrection. His *ultima aetas* is rather a return of the golden age.

David Flusser has argued that the ten-fold division of history derives from the Persian millennium.³⁶ There is a noteworthy parallel in the *Bahman Yasht*, or *Zand-i Vohuman Yasn*. Zarathustra was shown a vision of a tree with four branches, one of gold, one of silver, one of steel and one of mixed iron. The branches correspond to reigns. The fourth is "the evil sovereignty of the *divs* with disheveled hair . . . when thy tenth century will be at an end, O Zarathustra."³⁷ The *Bahman Yasht* is a Pahlavi text, and relatively late, and some of the reigns are assigned to Sassanian kings. The text as we have it is no earlier than the sixth century CE. Many scholars, however, have speculated that this view of history was found already in the lost *Yasht* of the *Avesta* on which this is a commentary.³⁸ The combination of four kingdoms and the tenth generation is arguably the closest parallel we have to the *Fourth Sibyl's* view of universal history. The correspondence is not exact; the Sibyl does not divide the ages according to metals, although as we have seen, Servius claimed that such a Sibylline oracle existed. We do not know exactly in what form these traditions were available in the first century of the Common Era. The Roman antiquarian Varro speaks of a Persian Sibyl, "of whom Nicanor spoke, who wrote of the deeds of Alexander of Macedon."³⁹ There is no other record, however, of Sibylline Oracles of Persian provenance, and if we assume that Sibylline Oracles were always written in Greek hexameters, it is unlikely

³⁴ H. Cancik, "Libri Fatales: Römische Offenbarungsliteratur, 557–558; B. Gladigow, "Aetas, aevum und saeculorum ordo: Zur Struktur zeitlicher Deutungssysteme," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 262–265. A haruspex allegedly took the comets that appeared after Caesar's death as a sign of the end of the ninth saeculum and the beginning of the tenth.

³⁵ See further Collins, "The Jewish Transformation of Sibylline Oracles," 195–196.

³⁶ Flusser, "The Four Empires," 162–174.

³⁷ B.T. Anklesaria, *Zand-i Vohuman Yasn* (Bombay: Camay Oriental Institute, 1967) 101. The motif of four periods associated with metals is also found in *Denkard* IX, 8.

³⁸ See especially A. Hultgård, "Bahman Yasht: A Persian Apocalypse," in *Mysteries and Revelations. Apocalyptic Studies Since the Uppsala Colloquium* (JSPSup 9, ed. J.J. Collins and J.H. Charlesworth; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 114–34; "Myth et Histoire dans l'Iran Ancien. Étude de quelques thèmes dans le Bahman Yasht," in *Apocalyptique iranienne et dualisme qoumrânien* (ed. G. Widengren, A. Hultgård, M. Philonenko; Paris: Maisonneuve, 1995) 63–162 (107).

³⁹ Lactantius, *Divine Institutions* 1.6.8.

that any existed.⁴⁰ The *Oracle of Hystaspes*, which is known primarily from Lactantius, but also from other authors, including Justin and Clement of Alexandria, provides some evidence for the currency of Persian apocalyptic ideas in the Hellenistic-Roman world.⁴¹ According to Aristocritus, Hystaspes said that “the fulfillment would take place after the completion of six thousand years,” but this formulation seems to be indebted to biblical, sabbatical, ideas.⁴² We cannot point to a specific Persian text that could have served as source for the Sibyl, but Persian traditions and motifs were certainly known in the Greco-Roman world. It is apparent that the “Apocalypse of Weeks” was neither the only nor the closest parallel to the formulation that we find in *Sib.Or.* 4. It is noteworthy that the motifs of conflagration and resurrection with which the Oracle ends, also have Persian parallels, although they are not integrated into Zarathustra’s vision in the *Bahman Yasht*.⁴³

Sib.Or. 4 also differs from the apocalypses in one notable respect. In the apocalypses, the coming judgment is inevitable. People may save themselves by repentance, but they cannot forestall the judgment. In *Sib.Or.* 4, however, the judgment is conditional, and may yet be averted.

SIBYLLINE ORACLES 1–2

The most elaborate account of universal history, divided into ten generations, is found in *Sib.Or.* 1–2, which originally were one oracle. The Sibyl begins by looking back at creation. The Flood marks the end of the fifth generation. The Sibyl, as Noah’s daughter-in-law, is located in the sixth. Noah is cast as a preacher of repentance. He is not as explicit as *Sib.Or.* 4 that the disaster can be avoided by repentance, but that seems to be

⁴⁰ Pace the maximalist views of M. Boyce, “The Poems of the Persian Sibyl and the Zand I Vahman Yasht,” in *Études irano-aryennes offertes à Gilbert Lazard* (Cahiers de Studia Iranica 7, ed. C.H. De Fouchécour and P. Gignoux; Paris: Association pour l’Avancement des Études Iranienes, 1989) 59–77.

⁴¹ J.R. Hinnells, “The Zoroastrian Doctrine of Salvation in the Roman World. A Study of the Oracle of Hystaspes,” in *Man and His Salvation: Studies in Memory of S.G.F. Brandon* (ed. E.J. Sharpe and J.R. Hinnells; Manchester: Manchester University, 1973) 125–248.

⁴² Aristocritus, *Theosophy*, cited by Hinnells, “The Zoroastrian Doctrine,” 128.

⁴³ Belief in a coming conflagration is explicitly attributed to Hystaspes by Justin, *Apol.* 1.20.1. The classic passage is in *Bundahishn* 30.19 ff. For resurrection: *Bundahishn* 34. See A. Hultgård, “Persian Apocalypticism,” in *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism. The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. J.J. Collins; New York: Continuum, 1998) 1.56–60. Persian belief in the resurrection of the dead is attested already about 300 BCE by Theopompus in Diogenes Laertius, “Proem” 9.

implied. Unfortunately, the original sequence of generations has been interrupted after the seventh generation by an insertion dealing with the incarnation and the career of Christ, in 1.324–400. The eighth and ninth generations are lost, but we are thrust into the tenth generation in 2.15.

The eschatology of *Sib.Or.* 2 goes through several phases. First, “the faithful chosen Hebrews will rule over exceedingly mighty men, having subjected them as of old, since power will never fail” (2.174–6). This passage is elaborated in decidedly Christian terms, by reference to the parable of the watchful servant. Then there is a passage dealing with the return of Elijah, which, again, is elaborated with allusions to the New Testament (“Alas for as many as are found bearing in the womb on that day . . .”). Then there is a passage (196–213) describing the destruction of the world by a river of fire. Then the archangels lead all the souls of men to judgment. The resurrection of the dead follows, described in physical terms (bones fastened with all kinds of joinings). The righteous pass safely through the river of fire, but the wicked are condemned to Gehenna. The righteous will live forever on a transformed earth, and will be able to save people from Hell by their intercession. It is well known that *Sib.Or.* 2 is closely related to the *Apocalypse of Peter*. There too the resurrection is described in very physical terms (4), and “cataracts of fire are let loose” (5) and the whole world is dissolved in conflagration. The archangels bring the sinners to judgment, and the fiery character of Hell is emphasized.

Lightfoot, following Dieterich, has observed that the account of the last judgment is disproportionately long and has a different source from the prophecy of history.⁴⁴ The interest in the punishment of the damned is typical of tour apocalypses rather than of historical ones.⁴⁵ Lightfoot has argued against the usual attempts to distinguish an underlying Jewish oracle in the eschatological section, and contends that the entire oracle from 2:196 on is a consistent adaptation of the *Apocalypse of Peter*.⁴⁶ She entertains the possibility that all of books one and two may have been composed by a Christian, living in the second century AD or later: “He assembled it all in imitation of the structure of the Apocalypse of Weeks,

⁴⁴ Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 129. Cf. A. Dieterich, *Nekyia: Beiträge zur Erklärung der neuentdeckten Petrusapokalypse* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893) 189, n.1.

⁴⁵ See J.J. Collins, ed. *Apocalypse. The Morphology of a Genre*. Semeia 14 (1979); M. Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell. An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).

⁴⁶ The priority of the *Apocalypse of Peter* is widely but not universally granted. For a dissenting opinion see T. Adamik, “The Description of Paradise,” in *The Apocalypse of Peter* (ed. J.N. Bremmer and I. Czachesz; Leuven: Peters, 2003) 78–90, especially 86.

but wadded with all sort of other material, Enochic, Petrine, Sibylline.”⁴⁷ But the structure of *Sib.Or.* 1–2 does not in fact correspond to that of the “Apocalypse of Weeks.” It is true that the “Apocalypse” speaks of the Flood as “the first consummation,” but it locates it in the second week, not the fifth. History is not divided symmetrically as it is in the Sibyl. Moreover, even Lightfoot recognizes that this hypothesis “does not explain the massive jolt to the structure at 1.323, between the Titans of the seventh generation and the coming of Christ,”⁴⁸ and admits that there is no evading the fact that the oracle is composite.⁴⁹ An older oracle that divided history into ten generations has been disrupted by an explicitly Christian passage, and the eschatology has been adapted to reflect the kind of interest in the afterlife that is more usually associated with the tour apocalypses.

There can be little doubt that the prophecy of universal history already had an eschatological ending. In light of the parallel in *Sib.Or.* 4, it is reasonable to assume that this ending included a conflagration, followed by resurrection, and everlasting beatitude on earth. This scenario is made more elaborate in *Sib.Or.* 2, but the basic structure persists. There is reason to suspect that this structure was ultimately of Persian origin, or shaped by Persian influence, especially in view of the prominence of the river of fire, through which the righteous pass unharmed.⁵⁰ It is usually assumed that the older oracle was Jewish. Lightfoot has challenged this view, and in view of the thorough reworking of the end of the work, the origin of the older oracle remains uncertain. It should be noted, however, that the theme of universal history is much more prominent in Jewish than in Christian eschatological texts. The eschatological rule of the Hebrews in *Sib.Or.* 2.174–76 also suggests Jewish origins, although it has clearly been Christianized in the present form of the text. The older, presumably Jewish, redaction was dated to a time before 70 CE by Kurfess, on the grounds that it did not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem.⁵¹ In view of the massive disruption of the second half of the oracle, no great confidence can be placed in this argument. But even the Christian redaction may be as early as the second century CE, in light of the parallels with the

⁴⁷ Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 149.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵⁰ *Sib.Or.* 2:252; cf. *Bundahishn* 30:19.

⁵¹ A. Kurfess, “Oracula Sibyllina I/II,” *ZNW* 40(1941) 151–65.

Apocalypse of Peter, so a date in the first century CE is not unreasonable for the Jewish stratum.

CONCLUSION

Despite their common features, the *Sibylline Oracles* were not modeled on the apocalypses. The oldest datable Jewish oracles, in *Sib.Or.* 3, do not embrace the distinctively apocalyptic eschatology that had already gained currency in the books of Enoch and Daniel. They do not look for the destruction of this world or for the resurrection of the dead. Neither do they divide history into periods in a systematic way. All of these features appear somewhat later in *Sib.Or.* 4 and *Sib.Or.* 1–2, but even these oracles do not betray the influence of Enoch and Daniel on their formulation of the periods of history. The four kingdoms of *Sib.Or.* 4 differ from those of Daniel, by retaining Assyria as the first kingdom. The motif of succeeding generations is indebted to Hesiod more than to Enoch or Daniel. Neither Enoch nor Daniel envisioned a conflagration at the end of history, and neither emphasized the physical nature of the resurrection in the manner we find in the Sibyls.

This is not to deny that the later *Sibylline Oracles* were influenced by apocalyptic tradition, broadly speaking. In the second century BCE, belief in resurrection was a novelty in Jewish circles. By the first century CE, it was relatively commonplace. It is not necessary to suppose that the author of a given *Sibylline Oracle* borrowed the idea from a specific source. The idea was broadly current, and individual authors were free to formulate it in different ways.

It is significant that the *Oracles* were written in Greek, while the earlier apocalypses were all in Hebrew or Aramaic. (Apocalypses written in Greek, such as 3 *Baruch* and the Revelation to John, begin to appear towards the end of the first century CE). The authors of the *Oracles* were familiar with a wide range of Hellenistic sources, including Hesiod, and political theories about the succession of kingdoms. They were also familiar, of course, with the biblical tradition, and *Sib.Or.* 1.87–103 clearly reflects the Enochic Book of the Watchers, but their sources were eclectic. It seems likely that the authors of *Sib.Or.* 4 and *Sib.Or.* 1–2 were familiar with the Persian idea of a millennium, followed by a conflagration and resurrection, even though it is unlikely that they understood the Persian context of these motifs. Rather it was a matter of finding ideas that bore some resemblance to

native Jewish beliefs, but also had currency in the Hellenistic world, and so could be imputed with some credibility to the pagan prophetess.

Finally, we should not underestimate the creativity of either the apocalyptic or the Sibylline writers. To be sure, they cobbled together their compositions from all sorts of traditions, but their works had their own distinctive character, and were not simply reproductions of sources. The prophecies of universal history that we find in books 4 and 1–2 of the *Sibylline Oracles* are more fully developed than anything we find in the Jewish apocalypses, or indeed, in the putative Greco-Roman and Persian sources on which their authors may have drawn.

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- Abhandlungen* 73
 Abraham 146, 147
 Abstention, sexual 126
 Abyss 147
 Achaean League 62, 65, 71
 Acrocorinth 65
 Actium, battle of 63, 189
 Acts of the Apostles 2
 Adad 142
 Adam 125, 151
 Admonitions 73, 76, 78, 79
Agape 110, 118n, 119, 126
 Agrippa 57
 Akiva, Rabbi 155, 157
 Alexander of Aphrodisias 35n
 Alexander the Great 144
 descendants of 192
 Alexander Polyhistor 189
 Allegory, allegorical interpretation 8, 168,
 169, 176, 177
 Amazons 121
 Amplification, rhetorical 1
 Andreas of Caesarea 9, 176
 Angelic guide 152
 Angelic powers 192
 Angelic status 147
 Angels 137, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 159
 Antediluvian kings 142
 Antiochus I of Commagene 142
 Aphrodisias 66n
 Aphrodite 88, 98, 99
 Aphthonius of Antioch 18n
Apocalypse of Abraham 8, 146, 146n, 147n
Apocalypse of Peter 198, 199, 199n, 201
Apocalypse of Weeks 188, 196, 198, 199,
 200
Apocalypse of Zephaniah 146
 Apocalyptic texts 185–202
 Christian 140
 Hellenistic 185
 Jewish 140
 Apollo 63, 64, 196
 of Delphi 76
 Apollonius of Tyana 154, 166
 Apostles 126
 Apotheosis (see also Divinization)
 61, 154
 Archangels 150, 199
 Aristides, Aelius 56
 Aristotle 4, 7, 91, 114, 127, 149n
Ascension of Isaiah 8, 146, 148, 148n, 149,
 149n, 152, 152n, 166
 Ascent at death 161–62
 Ascent to God 110
 Ascent to heaven 7–8, 135–66
 Ascents, typology of 7–8, 140–65
 Ascent to underworld 141
 Assyria, Assyrians 195, 196, 201
 Astrology 142
 Asyndeton 77
 Augustine 108
 Augustus (see also Octavian) 51, 52, 53,
 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 63, 67, 70, 143
 Aulus Gellius 154
 Babylon 194, 196
 Banquet invitations 178
 Banquet rooms 178
 Baptism 39
 Baruch 154, 166
 Basilides 148
 Bede, the Venerable 176
 Beloved 148, 149
 Benefactions 84, 86
 Bias 77, 82
 Biblicum (see Pontifical Biblical Institute)
 Biography 153n
 Bread from heaven 43, 45
 Caesarea Maritima 52
 Caesarean games 51, 53, 54
 Cardinal virtues 120
 Carthage 52
 Celerius, Publius 52, 53
 Celibacy 88, 104, 107, 108, 110n, 115
 Chaldean Oracles 136, 139
 Chariot (see also *Merkabah*) 155
 Chastity, 123, 124, 125, 126
 Chilon of Lacedaemonia 76, 80, 82, 83,
 84
 Chosen One 147–48, 152
 Chreia, chreiai 1, 12–13, 18–21, 75
 Expansion of 14–16
 Christ 148, 172, 199

- Christian prophets 167
 Christology 50
 Chrysippus 4, 89n, 92
 Cicero 160
 Claudius 52, 68, 69
 Cleanthes 92
 Clement of Alexandria 7, 113–34, 198
 Clement of Rome 118, 120, 131
 Cleobulus 84
 Commensality 168
 Common property (women as) 130
 Conflagration 198
 Contemplative life 121
 Conversion 49, 172, 175, 182
 Corinth 2–3, 49–72, 106
 Cornelius Scipio, Publius 50, 51–54, 56,
 58, 59, 60, 61, 67, 71
Community Rule 160
 Cosmic tree 141
 Creation 150, 198
 Cremation 154
 Cultural heroes 145–58
 Cumaean Sibyl 10
 Cynics, Cynicism 130n, 132
 Cyrenaics 132

Daimōn (see also *Paredros daimon*) 179,
 180
 Daniel 10, 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196,
 201
 Death 7, 161
 Deification 143, 153n, 158, 166
 Delphic maxims 78, 80, 84
 Demetrius of Phaleron 77
 Deparabolization 170n, 172
 Desire 125
 Deuteronomy 152
 Deutero-Pauline letters 6, 7, 113, 116, 122
 Dialogue 106
 Diaspora, Jewish 68, 72
Di Augusti 52
 Dining 172
 Dining metaphor 173, 176
 Dio of Prusa 7
 Diogenes Laertius 77
 Disappearances 143
Diva Augusta 3, 52
 Divination 165, 179, 182, 183
 Divination texts 9, 167, 168, 178–82
 Divine throne-chariot 159
 Divine will 146
 Divinization (see also *Apotheosis*) 8, 152
 Divorce 107
 Domitian 64
 Doric 55

 “Dream of Scipio” 8, 160–61, 162, 163n
 Easter vigil 174
 École biblique xi
 Ecstasy 135, 139
 Education (also see *Paideia*) 98, 99
 Egalitarianism 132
 Egypt, invasion of 191
 Eleazar 16
 Elephantine xi
 Elijah 152n, 166
 Return of 199
 Enkidu 144
 Enoch 149, 150, 153n, 154, 166, 188, 189,
 190, 192, 201
Enkrateia (see also *Self-control*) 121
 Epictetus 7, 107n, 130
 Epicurus (Epikouros) 4, 89, 90, 93, 102n,
 103, 108
 Epicureans 4–5, 90, 94n, 132
 Epigraphy 50–72
 Epiphanius of Salamis 171
 Epiphany 180
 Epistemology 42, 43
 Equality 120
 Equinox 150n
Eros 5, 88, 91, 93n, 94, 95, 98, 99, 100, 101,
 103, 107, 108, 109
 Eschatological interpretation 170–71,
 174, 182
 Eschatological kingdom 195
 Eschatological scenarios 192
 Eschatology 173, 175, 199, 200
 Eternal life 41, 43, 46
 Eucharist 45, 46, 47, 172, 173, 174, 183
 Euhemerism 189
 Eve 122, 125, 151
 Exodus 174

 Fabius Maximus, Paulus 52–53
 Fable 14
 Faith 38
 Fallen angels 149
Familia 106, 107
 Fates 163
 Father 44–45
 Female superiority 98
 Fictitious material 22
 First death 165
Flamines 66
 Flood 192, 195, 198
 Forum (Roman)
 in Athens 64, 64n
 in Corinth 63, 63n, 64, 65
 in Pompeii 64

- Four kingdoms schema 194, 195, 196, 197, 201
 Friendship 83, 84, 90, 90n, 105, 106, 110
 Fulfillment of Scripture 17–18
- Gaius 50, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60–62, 66, 67
 Gallio 69, 70–71
 Garden of Eden 147
 Gate of heaven 145
 Gehenna (see also Hell) 199
 Genesis 150, 189
 Ghassul xi
 Gilgamesh epic 144
 Gnostic anthologies 4
 Gnostic literature (see Wisdom Literature)
 Gnostic poetry 75
Gnosis, Gnosticism 119, 121, 136, 138, 139, 140, 156
 Gnostic myths 151
 God 102, 105, 110, 115, 124, 125, 127, 128, 137, 145, 146, 147, 150, 153, 159, 161, 172, 191, 192, 195
 Greek gnomic Literature 81
 Genres of 74–75
 Greek historiography 194
 Greek magical papyri 135, 179–82
- Hades 138, 164
Haustafeln (see Household codes)
 Heavenly temple 160
 Heavens 137
 Seven 140
Hekhalot literature 147n, 156
 Helios 157, 158
 Hell (see also Gehenna) 147
 Hera 99, 154
 Hera Gamelia 99
 Heracles 8, 153–54, 166
 Heraclitus 186
 Hermes 66
 Hermes Trismegistus 161
 Hermetic literature 136, 139, 140
 Hermogenes of Tarsus 1, 18–21
 Herod 52
 Herodian dynasty 68
 Herodotus 193
 Hesiod 189, 201
 Heterosexuality 93n, 94n
 Hierocles 7, 114, 115, 115n, 127
 Hippolytus of Rome 169
 History of Religions 135, 136
 Holy Spirit 148
 Home (*oikos*) 96
 Homosexual love 93n, 94n, 101, 102
- Honor 84
 Household codes 6, 7, 79n, 97n, 106, 116, 117, 118, 128, 131, 132
 Household management 114, 115, 122
 Hughes, E.R. 177
 Human perfection 117
 Hunt, W.H. 9, 176–77
 Hybris 80, 83, 85
- Immortality 143, 153, 154, 159, 160, 163, 166
 Imperial calendar 59
 Imperial cult 2–3, 49–72
 Imperial cult priests 66–68
 Imperial games 56
 Imperial sacrifices 57
 Imperial temples 64
Imperium 53, 70
 Incarnation 36
Infamia 103n
 Inspiration 89
 Invocations 180
 “I”-sayings of Jesus 167, 170
 Isaiah 148, 152
 Isocrates 75
- James 73
 Jeremiah, prophecy of 196
 Jerome 104, 175, 176
 Jerusalem 191, 192
 Jesus 16, 148, 151, 173
 ascension of 154, 166
 Jewish exegesis 169
 Jewish history 194
 Jewish mysticism 159
 Johannine studies 30
 John the Baptist 27, 31, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 40n, 41, 42, 43
 Josephus 23, 153
 Joshua 153
 Jubilee theology 196
 Judgment 172, 188, 190, 191, 192, 195, 199
 Julian basilica 65
 Julius Caesar 60, 63, 67, 143
 Justin Martyr 198
- King 142–43
 Kingdom of God 39, 40, 41, 174, 175, 192, 195
 Kleanthes (see Cleanthes)
 Knowledge 119
Kosmos (“world”) 127–28
- Lachesis 163
Lectisternia 179
 Lethe, River of 163

- Levi 145, 146, 146n, 166
 Libanius 20, 92
 Labor 120
 Laodicea 167
 Liturgical setting 174
 Livia 3, 52
Logos 2, 27–48, 104, 118
 Lord's Supper (see also Eucharist) 9, 172, 176
 Love (see also *Eros*) 4–5, 77, 92, 94, 102, 103, 106, 107, 118, 119, 126
 Lucian 154
 Lucius 66
 Lucretius 4–5, 89, 89n, 92, 93, 93n, 103
 Lyonnet, S. xi
- Macedonia 190
 Macrobius 140
 Magic 147n
 Magicians 141, 158–59, 166
Mahnspruch 78n
 Male superiority 98
 Mandaean religion 136, 138
 Marcion 131
 Marcius Barea Soranus, Quintus 52, 53
 Marital reciprocity 122
 Mark, Gospel of 153n
 Marriage 87–111, 113–34
 Greco-Roman 4–6, 7, 87–111, 113–34
 in Clement of Alexandria 7
 in Paul 6, 87–111
 Marriage ceremony 110
 Marriage of the gods 66n
 Martini, C.M. xi
 Martyrdom 108, 117
 Masters 113, 117, 132
Materfamilias 107
 Meals in Judaism 173
 Medicine men 141
 Megarians 132
Merkabah (see also Chariot) 155
 Messene inscription 2–3, 50, 51, 53, 55, 57, 60, 66
 Messiah 147n, 152, 169
 Messianic banquet 9, 172–73, 174, 175n
 Middle Platonism 107, 110, 129n, 139
 Milky Way 161
 Mithraism 8, 136, 137
 Mithras 158
 Mithras Liturgy 135, 139, 158
 Moderation 84
 Mohammed 140
 Moon 164
 ascent to 165
- Moses 8, 152, 153, 166
Mos maiorum 52, 70n, 72
 Musonius Rufus 4–7, 89, 98, 99, 100, 102, 107, 108, 115, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 127, 129
 Mystery cults 158
 Myth of Er 8, 162–63
- Nag Hammadi texts 140
 Narration 14
 Natural desire 125
 Neo-Platonism 140
 Neo-Pythagoreanism 7, 116, 131, 132
 Nero 53, 65, 71
 New Jerusalem Bible 12n
 Nicholas of Myra 18n
 Noah 198
 Non-retaliation 85
 Numenius 140
 Numismatics 50
- Octavia 63
 Octavian 190
 Oecumenius 170, 174, 176
Oikonomikos tradition 113n
Oikos (see Home) 97n
 Olympus 154–55
 Ophites 148
Oracle of Hystaspes 198, 198n
 Oracular speech 185
 Oracular response 159
 Oracular session 159
 Origen 169, 174
 Orphics, Orphism 139
- Paideia* 98
 Parables of Jesus 170n, 172
 Paradise 147, 149, 150, 152, 156–57
 Paraenesis 3, 73–86
 Definition of 3
 Parataxis 77
Paredros daimon 9, 179–82
 Parmenides 8, 157, 166
 Parousia 88, 108, 170, 171, 172, 174, 182, 200
 Paschal liturgy 174
 Passion narrative 1, 11–26
 Pastoral Letters 6, 7, 80, 107n, 113, 116, 122
 Paul 49–72, 87–111, 138, 149
 Pausanias 63
 Pederasty (see also Homosexual) 100, 101
 Peregrinus Proteus 8, 154, 166
 Perfection 117, 120
 Peripatetics 91
 Persephone 164
 Persia 195

- Peter 124, 126
- Peter, First Letter of 73
- Philia* (see also Friendship) 4–5, 90, 91, 94, 107, 110, 110n
- Philodemus 93
- Philo 23, 136, 153
- Philosophy 95, 97, 98, 99, 108, 120, 129, 131
- Pistis* (“faith”) 38, 40, 41, 42, 43–44, 45, 46
- Planetary gods 138
- Plato, Platonism 2, 7, 29, 30, 98, 110, 116, 117, 120, 121n, 127, 129, 130, 131, 138, 140, 149, 150, 163n
- Pliny the Younger 70
- Plutarch 5, 7, 8, 87–111, 114, 129n, 130, 132n, 149, 163, 164
- Pneuma* (“spirit”) 2, 27–48
- Poimandres* 8, 166
- Polis* (“state”) 95, 96, 97n, 111
- Polyvalence 168
- Pompeii 64
- Pontifex maximus* 67
- Pontifical Biblical Institute ix–xi, 50
- Pontius Pilate 51–52
- Primeval history 192
- Priscian 18n
- Private property 130
- Proclus 140
- Procreation 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130
- Progymnasmata* 1
- Promiscuity 131
- Prophecy 185, 191, 194, 195, 199
- Pseudepigraphy 192
- Ptolemaic dynasty 191
- Pudicitia* 103n, 105
- Punishment of the damned 199
- Pydna, battle of 190
- Pythagoreans 131
- Pythagoras 132
- Quintilian 1, 18n, 21–23
- Rabbinic parables 157
- Reason 120
- Rebirth 38, 39, 40
- Reciprocity 61
- Recontextualization 17
- Repentance 172, 175, 182, 195, 198
- Resurrection 46, 47, 192, 195, 198, 199, 200, 201
- Return of Christ (see Parousia)
- Revelation 146–51, 180, 182
- Rhetorical amplification: see Rhetorical elaboration
- Rhetorical elaboration 11–26
 - in Josephus 24
 - in Philo 23–24
 - in *Testament of Joseph* 24–25
- Riddles (in Fourth Gospel) 30n
- Righteous One 147n
- Ritual meal 180, 181
- River of fire 199
- Roma 52, 56
- Romanitas* 61, 62n
- Roman law 107
- Rome 190, 194
- Romulus 143
- Sacramental interpretation 174
- Sacred meals, Greco-Roman 178
- Sacrificial meat 178
- Sallman, W. 9, 177
- Sapientia* 104, 108
- Schökel, L.A. xi
- Scipio Africanus 160
- Second death 165
- Second Sophistic 7
- Second Vatican Council xi
- Sejanus 52, 67
- Self-control 121
- Self-immolation 154
- Seneca 4, 6, 7, 69n, 100, 103n, 104, 104n, 107, 107n, 124, 132n
- Septuagint 29
- Serapis 178–79
- Servius 140
- Seven 188n
- Seven heavens 136, 137, 138, 140, 146, 147, 148, 149
- Seven planetary gods 137, 140
- Seven planets 148, 151
- Seven Sages 3, 73–86
- Seven spheres 151
- Sexual pleasure 125, 131
- Shamans, Shamanism 8, 141–42, 166
 - ecstatic journeys of 141–42
 - eskimo shamans 142
- Shamash 142
- Sibyl, *Sibylline Oracles* 9–10, 185–202
 - Cumaeae Sibyl 196
 - Erythrean Sibyl 187, 191
 - Jewish Sibyllina 187–88
 - pagan Sibyllina 186–87
 - Persian Sibyl 197
 - Roman Sibylline Books 187
- Similitudes of Enoch 146–48, 151, 166
- Slaves, slavery 113, 117, 132

- Social duties (see also Household codes) 113
 Socio-rhetorical interpretation 1, 11–26
 Socrates 16, 132, 162
 Solomon,
 house of 190
 temple of 190
 Solon of Athens 76
 Son of man 39, 40, 41, 46, 47, 147n, 148n, 152n, 168
 Song of Songs 169, 170, 172
Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice 159, 166
Sophrosyne 4, 79–82
 Soul 143, 153, 161, 165
 ascent of 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143
 doctrine of the 159, 160
 immortality of the 154, 161, 163
 journey of the 141n, 162–65
 union of 119
Spruchreihen 73
 Stevens, S.G. 177
 Stobaeus 114
 Stoics, Stoicism 2, 6, 27–48, 74, 87, 92, 94, 99, 104, 105, 114, 124, 125n, 127, 128, 129, 130n, 138
 Studium Biblicum Franciscanum xi
 Styx 164
 Supernatural revealer 180
 Syrian kings 192

 Table fellowship 172, 173
 Temperance 120, 121, 122, 132
 Ten generation schema 196, 197
Testament of Joseph 24–25
Testament of Levi 145, 146, 146n, 166
 Thales of Miletus 76, 80
 Theon, Aelius 1, 14, 19
 Theophrastus 4, 91, 92, 94
 Thespius 164, 166

 Third heaven 146, 147, 150
 Throne 181
 Tiberius 52, 60–62
 Timarchus 164, 164n, 166
 Titans 189
 Tower of Babel 189
 Trajan 70
 Trance (see also Ecstasy) 141–42
 Transformation of the earth 192, 199
 Tripod 181

 Universal history 187, 188–92
 Universal peace 192
 Utnapishtim 144

 Valentinians 148
 Varro 197
 Vergil 10, 196, 197
 Vesuvius, Mount 195
 Virgins, Virginity 115, 128n
 Virtue, virtues 113, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123
 Visions 148

 Watchers 144, 145, 150, 192, 201
 Widows 128
 Wisdom Literature 3, 74
 Wisdom of Solomon 29–30
 Women 113–34
 World (see also *Kosmos*) 127–28
 World kingdoms 193–95

 Xenophon 7

 Zarathustra 197
 Zeus Oromasdes 142
 Zeus Panamaros 178
 Zion, Mount 192
 Zoroaster 139

INDEX OF MODERN AUTHORS

- Abt, A. 180n
 Adamik, T. 199n
 Aguilar, R.M. 87n
 Alcock, S.E. 55
 Aletti, J.-N. ixn
 Alford, H. 175n
 Algra, K. 138n
 Allison, Jr., D.C. 12n
 Allo, E.B. 173n
 Althoff, J. 75n, 78n, 79n, 80n
 Amandry, M. 59
 Andersen, F.I. 149n, 150n, 151n
 Annas, J. 35n
 Antklesaria, B.T. 197n
 Anz, W. 140
 Arafat, K.W. 63n
 Arda Viraf 137
 Arjava, A. 108–9, 109n
 Arkins, B. 93n
 Arnim, H. von 114n
 Ashton, J. 30n, 31n, 40n
 Asmis, E. 94n, 129n
 Asper, M. 90n
 Aune, D.C. 103n
 Aune, D.E. 8–9, 101n, 167–84

 Babut, D. 102n
 Balch, D. L. 97n, 114n, 131n
 Barton, J. 10, 185, 185n
 Bartsch, S. 89n, 93n
 Bartscherer, T. 89n, 93n
 Bassani, M. 97n
 Bauckham, R. 170n, 173n
 Bauman-Martin, B.J. 107n, 109n, 117n
 Beale, G. 169n, 170n, 175, 175n
 Beard, M. 143n, 179n
 Beasley-Murray, G.R. 169n
 Beckwith, I.T. 173n
 Belezos, T. 71n
 Bénatouïl, T. 114n
 Betz, H.D. 101n, 135n, 158n, 159n, 179n, 180n
 Beyer, K. 156, 156n
 Bianchi, U. 139
 Billerbeck, P. 86n
 Blundell, M.W. 83n
 Boissonade, J.F. 83n
 Bolognesi, G. 14n
 Boring, M.E. 167n
 Bormann, L. 173n
 Bornkamm, G. 173n
 Boulogne, J. 90n, 101n
 Bousset, W. 8, 136, 136n, 137, 137n, 138, 138n, 171n
 Bowen, W.R. 89n
 Boyce, M. 198n
 Boxall, I. 168n
 Breglia Pulci Doria, L. 186n
 Bremmer, J. N. 199n
 Brenk, F.E. 1–10, 4–5, 163n, 164n, 165n
 Brennan, T. 90n
 Briggs, C.A. 156, 156n
 Broudéhoux, J.-P. 123n
 Brown, F. 156, 156n
 Brown, P. 123n
 Brown, R.D. 89n, 91n, 93n
 Brown, R.E. 18n, 22n, 23n, 31n
 Buchanan, G.W. 169n, 175n
 Buch-Hansen, G. 2n, 27–28, 28n, 29
 Buck, C.D. 55n
 Buitenwerf, R. 9–10, 188n, 189n, 191, 191n
 Bultmann, R. 167n
 Burnet, A. 59
 Butler, H.E. 22n

 Caird, G. 174n
 Caldwell, L. 99n
 Cameron, A. 64n
 Campbell, G. 90n, 93n
 Cancik, H. 91, 186n, 197n
 Cantarella, E. 96n
 Caplan, H. 19n
 Caramico, A. 87n
 Carmichael, E.D.H. 110n
 Celerius, Publius 53
 Cervelli, I. 186n
 Chachesz, I. 199n
 Chadwick, H. 131n
 Charles, R.H. 169n, 172n, 173n, 175n
 Charlesworth, J.H. 24, 146n, 148n, 175n, 185n, 197n
 Chavez Barcenaz, I. 141n
 Cherniss, H. 165n
 Cherry, J.F. 55n

- Chilton, C.W. 93n
 Chirassi Columbo, I. 187n
 Christensen, J. 2n, 27n
 Christidis, A.-F. 55n
 Clarke, A.D. 69n
 Cohen, D. 96n
 Collins, A.Y. 7–8, 16n, 135–66, 188n
 Collins, J.J. 9–10, 137n, 140n, 152n, 185–202
 Colpe, C. 8, 135n, 137, 138, 139, 139n, 142n, 143n, 144n, 153n, 154n
 Colson, F.H. 153n
 Comedeca, G. 69n
 Constantinou, E.S. 176n
 Cooper, K. 6, 106, 106n, 107, 107n
 Couliano, I. (see Culianu, I.) 139
 Coxon, A.H. 157, 157n
 Crawford, M.B. 87n
 Culianu, I. 8, 139, 139n, 140, 140n, 148n
 Culpepper, R.A. 31n, 43n
 Curtius, E. 56n

 Danby, H. 155
 Darko, D.K. 97n, 129n
 Dassmann, E. 135n
 Davila, J.R. 141n
 De Lacey, P. 164n, 165n
 Delgado, M. 193n
 DeMaris, R. 62n
 Deming, W. 87n, 123n, 131n
 Despotis, S. 71n
 Deterding, P.E. 170n
 Dibelius, M. 73, 73n, 74, 75
 Dieterich, A. 135, 135n, 158, 199, 199n
 Dillon, M. 57n, 97n
 Dittenberger, W. 56n, 75n, 142n
 Do Céu Fialho, M. 88n
 Dodd, C.H. 31–32, 32n
 Draczkowski, M. 130n
 Drew-Bear, T. 71n
 Driver, S.R. 156, 156n
 Ducrey, P. 178n
 Dunderberg, I. 29n
 Dunn, J.D.G. 26n, 167n

 Eddy, S.K. 194n
 Einarsson, B. 164n, 165n
 Eliade, M. 139n, 141, 141n, 142n
 Elsner, J. 55n
 Engberg-Pedersen, T. 2, 27–48, 73n, 74, 74n, 79n, 103n, 107n
 Engel, D. 129n
 Engemann, J. 135n
 Epstein, I. 155n

 Eshel, E. 160n
 Evans, C.A. 107n
 Evans, T.V. 53n

 Fairweather, J. 69n
 Feichtinger, B. 88n, 94n
 Ferreira Leão, D. 103n
 Feuillet, A. 169n
 Fishbane, M. 137n
 Fishwick, D. 50n, 54, 54n, 57n, 58n, 59n, 63n
 Fitzgerald, J.T. 91n, 95, 103n
 Fitzmyer, J.A. 81n, 87n, 108n, 109n
 Flusser, D. 195n, 196n, 197, 197n
 Fonck, L. x
 Fortenbaugh, W.W. 91n, 92n
 Fouchécour, C.H. de 198n
 Frankenmölle, H. 170n
 Frazer, J.G. 154n
 Frazier, F. 88n, 94n, 102n, 103n
 Frede, D. 139n
 Freedman, H. 24
 Friesen, S.J. 50n

 Gaka, K. 122n
 García López, J. 87n
 García Martínez, F. 159n, 160n
 Geytenbeek, F.C. van 115
 Giannantonì, G. 90n
 Gianto, A. ixn
 Giesen, H. 174n
 Gigante, M. 90n
 Gignoux, P. 198n
 Gilbert, M. ixn, x, xin
 Gilabert, P. 101n
 Gill, D.W.J. 67n, 178n
 Gilliam, J.F. 178n
 Ginzberg, L. 1, 25
 Glare, P.G.W. 70n
 Gnoli, G. 140n
 Goehring, J.E. 80n
 Goessler, L. 95n
 Gomez, P. 101n
 Goodrich, N.L. 145n
 Gordon, P. 95n
 Görgemanns, H. 87n, 94n
 Gradel, I. 56n
 Graf, F. 88n
 Grant, F.C. 142n
 Graver, M. 93n
 Grayson, A.K. 143n, 194n
 Grilli, A. 93n
 Gritti, E. 97n, 119n
 Groote, M. de 174n

- Grubbs, J.E. 89n, 97n, 123n
 Gruen, E. 188
 Gutas, D. 91n

 Haase, W. 136n
 Habermehl, P. 135n, 138, 139n, 142n, 144n
 Hägg, H. 125n, 128n
 Hall, J.M. 55n
 Hallett, C.H. 66, 66n
 Halperin, D. 157, 157n
 Hamilton, M.W. 80n
 Hanson, A.E. 178n
 Hardin, J. 70n, 71n
 Harmon, J.M. 154n
 Harrington, W. 173, 173n
 Hatzfeld, J. 179n
 Hawley, R. 95n
 Hellholm, D. 186n, 197n
 Helmbold, W.C. 165n
 Hennecke, E. 16n
 Henrichs, A. 179
 Hershsbell, J.P. 101n
 Hillard, T. 57n
 Himmelfarb, M. 147n, 199n
 Hine, H. 101n
 Hinnels, J.R. 198n
 Hock, R.F. 18n, 20n, 21n
 Hoek, A. van den 118n, 120n
 Holl, K. 171
 Holland, G.S. 95n
 Holum, K.G. 52n
 Horsley, G.H.R. 53n, 178n
 Horsley, R.A. 49n, 50n
 Huby, P. 91n
 Hultgård, A. 140n, 197n, 198n
 Hultgren, A.J. 170n
 Hultkranz, Å. 141n
 Hunt, W.H. 177n
 Hunter, D.G. 116n, 123n, 125n, 128n
 Hurley, D.H. 69n
 Hurst, L.D. 28n

 Indelli, G. 93n
 Innes, D. 101n
 Isaac, E. 175n
 Isnardi Parente, M. 114n

 Jachmann, G. 196n
 Jeanrond, W. 88n
 Jedrkiewicz, S. 101n
 Jeremias, J. 173n
 Jones, C.P. 154n
 Jones, H.S. 70

 Jonge, M. de 24n, 145n
 Judge, E.A. 62n, 68n
 Jufresa, M. 101n

 Karakolis, C. 71n
 Karasik, K. 141n
 Kearsley, R.A. 53n
 Kee, H.C. 24n
 Kent, J.H. 63n, 67n
 Kertelge, K. 170n
 Kertzer, D.I. 104n
 Kiddle, M. 173n
 Kijewska, A. 99n, 115n
 Kinder, D. 129n
 Kistemaker, S.J. 176, 176n
 Knibb, M.A. 148n, 152n
 Koch, K. 193n
 Koester, C.R. 30n
 Konstan, D. 90n, 91n
 Kratz, R.G. 193n
 Kugel, J.L. 24n
 Kurfess, A. 196n, 200, 200n

 Labahn, M. 62n
 Ladd, G.E. 173n, 174, 174n, 175n
 Lagrange, M.-J. x
 Laks, A. 113n
 Lambert, W.G. 142n
 Langlands, R. 5–6, 103, 103n
 Laughlin, R.M. 141n
 Layton, B. 148, 161n, 162n
 Leão, D.L. 101n
 Lebram, J.C.H. 193n
 Lehmann, C.M. 52n
 Lendon, J.E. 61, 61n
 Liddell, H.G. 70
 Lightfoot, J.L. 9–10, 185, 185n, 188, 188n, 196, 196n, 199, 199n, 200, 200n
 Lilla, S. 129n
 Lipka, M. 99n
 Lo Cascio, F. 101n
 Logan, A.H.B. 114n
 Lohmeyer, E. 172n, 173n
 Lohse, E. 173n
 Long, A.A. 35n, 36n
 Lönnrot, E. 25n
 López López, R. 88n

 MacDonald, M.Y. 97n
 Mack, B. 18n, 19n
 Mackenzie, R. 70
 Malherbe, A.J. 80n
 Maraval, P. 169n
 Marcovich, M. 101n

- Marcus, R. 152n
 Marrou, H.-I. 124n, 129
 Marsch, E. 193n
 Martin, D.B. 94n
 Martyn, J.L. 31n
 Mayhew, R. 91n
 McNamara, J.A. 95n, 98n
 Meeks, W. 31n
 Mees, M. 124, 128n
 Méndez Dosuna, J. 55n
 Mestre, F. 101n
 Millar, F. 49, 49n, 51, 54, 54n, 71
 Mitchell, S. 49, 64, 64n, 71
 Momigliano, A. 187, 187n
 Morgan, T. 80n
 Mossman, J. 101n
 Most, G.W. 89n
 Mounce, R.H. 173n
 Moxnes, H. 94n
 Müller, U.B. 173n

 Nagle, D.B. 91n
 Natali, C. 113n
 Nesselrath, H.-G. 106n
 Neusner, J. 155n
 Newsom, C. 159n, 160, 160n
 Nickau, K. 80n
 Nicklesburg, G.W.E. 144n, 148n, 151n
 Nikolaidis, A.G. 96n, 98n, 106n
 Nieto Ibáñez, J.M. 88n
 Nisbet, R.G.M. 196n
 North, H. 80n, 81n
 North, J. 143n, 179n
 Noy, D. 69n
 Nussbaum, M.C. 5–6, 89n, 90n, 91n, 93n, 94n, 100, 103, 103n, 121n, 157, 158, 158n

 Obink, D. 95n
 O'Brien Wicker, K. 97n
 O'Connor, D.K. 90n
 Olbricht, T.H. 80n
 O'Neill, E.N. 18n, 19n, 20n, 21n
 Opsomer, J. 88n, 94n, 103n
 Osborne, G.R. 173, 173n, 176, 176n
 Osiek, C.A. 97n

 Pagels, E. 114n
 Parca, M. 99n
 Parke, H.W. 186n, 187n, 196n
 Parker, C.P. 115
 Paschke, B.A. 107n
 Pateman, A. 73n
 Patterson, C.B. 95n, 97n
 Patillon, M. 14n

 Payne, A. 94n
 Pearson, B. 175n
 Pech, B. 96n
 Pelling, C. 101n
 Pennington, A. 147n
 Pérez Jiménez, A. 87n, 90n
 Perrin, N. 173n
 Perry, B.E. 75n
 Pesche, M. 140
 Petersen, A.K. 74n
 Peterson, E. 181n, 182, 182n, 183n
 Peterson, J. 80n
 Philonenko, M. 140n, 197n
 Plessner, M. 131n
 Pohlmann, K. 100n, 121n
 Pomeroy, S. 95n, 97n
 Popkes, W. 74, 74n
 Porter, S.E. 107n
 Preisendanz, K. 179n
 Price, A.W. 89n, 91n, 94n
 Price, M.J. 63n
 Price, S.R.F. 49, 49n, 50n, 54, 54n, 66n, 71, 143n, 179n
 Priest, J. 175n
 Prieur, J.-M. 16n
 Prigent, P. 174, 174n
 Pritchard, J.B. 142n, 144n, 151n
 Purgold, K. 56n
 Purington, J. 90n

 Rademaker, A. 80n
 Rajak, T. 68, 68n
 Ramelli, I. 101n, 106n, 123n, 129n
 Rasimus, T. 29n
 Raubitshek, A.E. 63a
 Redford, D.B. 143n
 Reinhartz, A. 28, 28n, 31n
 Reis, B. 139n
 Rensberger, D. 40n
 Reydam-Schils, G. 5–6, 7, 87n, 99n, 100, 106n, 113–34
 Reynolds, J.M. 52n
 Ribeiro Ferreira, J. 103n
 Ripollès, P.P. 59n
 Rist, J. 93n, 101n
 Rives, J.B. 52, 52n
 Rizakis, A.D. 62n
 Robbins, V.K. 1, 11–26
 Robeiro Ferreira, J. 88n
 Robinson, O.F. 70n
 Rolliger, R. 193n
 Roloff, J. 170, 170n
 Ross, M.K. 173n
 Rossetti, D.G. 177n

- Rubinkiewicz, R. 146n, 147n
 Russell, D.A. 101n
 Russo, A. 174n

 Saïd, E. 136n
 Saller, R.P. 104n
 Sampley, J.P. 107n
 Sandbach, F.H. 89, 103n
 Sanders, E.P. 173
 Satake, A. 167n, 171n
 Scannapieco, R. 87n, 88n, 93n, 102n
 Schaff, P. 104n
 Schindler, D.C. 94n
 Schneemelcher, W. 16n
 Schneider, H. 91n
 Schofield, M. 113n
 Scholem, G.G. 156, 156n, 157n
 Schüssler Fiorenza, E. 114n
 Scott, R. 70
 Scott, W. 32n
 Scotton, P.D. 66, 66n
 Searby, B. 114n
 Sedley, D.N. 35n, 36n, 91n
 Segal, A. 136n, 141n, 143n, 146n
 Segbroeck, F. van 17n, 74n
 Segovia, F.F. 31n
 Seppilli, T. 187n
 Sharpe, E.J. 198n
 Sharples, A.W. 91n
 Sher, R.K. 53n
 Shorey, P. 162n, 163n
 Sihvola, J. 6, 89n, 91n, 100n, 121n
 Ska, J.-L. ixn
 Smith, D.E. 173n, 175n
 Smith, J.Z. 138n
 Sordi, M. 70n
 Sparks, H.F.D. 145n, 146n, 147n
 Spawforth, A.J.S. 62n
 Speiser, E.A. 142n, 144n
 Stadter, P.A. 101n
 Standhartinger, A. 173n
 Starr, J. 73n, 74n, 79n
 Stegman, T.D. 20n
 Strack, H.L. 86n
 Strecker, G. 12n, 15n
 Strömberg, R. 84n
 Suggit, J.N. 174n
 Swain, S. 102n, 194n
 Sweet, J.P.M. 171n
 Swete, H.B. 169n, 171n, 173n
 Swift, E.H. 66n

 Tabor, J.D. 140, 140n, 149n
 Tashalan, M. 71n

 Taylor, J. 1–2, 11–26
 Taylor, J.E. 52n
 Thackeray, H.S.J. 153n
 Thesleff, H. 82n, 131n, 132
 Thilo, G. 196n
 Thomas, C.M. 71n
 Thomas, J. 73n
 Thompson, A.A. 70n
 Thorsteinsson, R.M. 107n
 Tiedemann, H. 107n
 Tigchelaar, E.J.C. 159n, 160n
 Torre, C. 6, 104, 104n, 105, 105n
 Trapp, M. 101n, 102n
 Trebilco, P.R. 64n
 Tredici, K. del 173n
 Treggiari, S. 103n, 104n
 Trell, B.L. 63n
 Tsouvala, G. 106n
 Tzanetou, A. 99n
 Tziatzi-Papagiann, M. 75n

 Usener, H. 89, 93, 102n

 VanderKam, J.C. 147n, 148n, 151n, 152n
 Van der Stockt, L. 88n, 102n
 Vanhoye, A. xi
 Vielhauer, Ph. 185, 185n
 Völker, W. 116n
 Volz, P. 175n
 Vottero, D. 104n

 Wace, H. 104n
 Walbank, M. 63, 63n, 65
 Walker, S. 64n
 Ward, J.K. 93n
 Ward, R.B. 107n
 Ward-Perkins, J. M. 52n
 Ware, J. 103n
 Watson, F. 27–28, 28n
 Wedderburn, A.J.M. 114n
 Weinrich, W.C. 175n, 176n
 Weisbrod Robinson, A. 87n
 Weiss, J. 75n
 Wendland, P. 115n
 Wengst, K. 81n
 West, A.B. 67n, 71n
 White, F.C. 102n
 Wiarda, T. 176, 176n
 Widengren, G. 136n, 140n, 197n
 Wiesehöfer, J. 193n, 194n
 Wilhelm, F. 131n
 Will, E. 178n
 Williams, C. 63–64, 64n
 Williams, F. 171, 171n

- Wilson, R. McL. 16n
Wilson, W.T. 74, 74n, 77n, 78n, 79
Wimbush, V. 80n, 125n
Winter, B.W. 2-3, 49-72, 89n, 102n, 104n
Wright, N.T. 28n
Wright, R.A. 103n

Yarbrough, O.L. 107n

Zangenberg, J. 62n
Zeller, D. 3-4, 73-86
Zerwick, M. ix
Zetzel 51, 51n, 54, 54n
Zimmermann, R. 30n, 59n

INDEX OF NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES

Matthew

8:11 174
 18:20 125
 22:1-4 174
 24:33 172
 24:42-44 170n
 26:29 174
 26:63 15
 27:32 22
 27:35 17

Mark

8 17
 8:31 12, 13, 14n, 15n, 20, 21, 21n, 23,
 26
 8:31-38 21
 8:32-38 1, 20
 9 17
 9:30-32 20
 9:31 12
 10 17
 10:32-33 12
 10:32-34 15, 17, 20
 13:29 172
 13:33-37 170, 170n, 172
 14:43-46 13
 14:43-16-8 11-26,
 14:61 16
 14:64 13
 15-16 12
 15:1 13
 15:15 13
 15:16-19 13
 15:19 13
 15:21 22
 15:24 17
 15:29-32 17-18
 15:33-39 13, 17
 16:7 13

Luke

6:27 86
 12:35-38 170, 172
 12:35-40 170n
 12:36b 170
 12:37b 170
 15:5 174
 15:2 173

22:9 16
 22:29ff. 174
 23:26 22
 23:34 17
 24:19-24 15-16

John

1 31, 36-39, 47
 1:1-4 37
 1:1-5 36, 37
 1:1-18 33-34
 1:2 33
 1:6-8 37
 1:9 37n
 1:9-11 37n
 1:9-13 37, 40
 1:10 34
 1:11 37
 1:11-13 37
 1:12 38
 1:12-13 37, 38
 1:13 34, 38
 1:14 28n, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38
 1:15 34, 37
 1:16 38
 1:18 33, 34, 38, 43
 1:19-28 41
 1:29-34 27, 34, 36
 1:30 34, 30, 37
 1:32-33 28, 28n, 34, 36n, 42n
 1:32-34 37
 1:34 37
 1:41 34
 1:49 34
 3 31, 36, 38, 39-43, 47
 3:1-8 40
 3:1-13 41, 42
 3:3 39
 3:3-8 40
 3:5 39
 3:8 39, 41, 43
 3:9 39
 3:9-13 40
 3:10 39
 3:10-13 39
 3:11 39, 42
 3:12 39
 3:14 40

3:14-16	39	7:39	42n
3:14-21	41, 42	8:58	34
3:17-21	39	12:23b-24	21
3:18-21	40	12:25	21n
3:21	40	19:9	16
3:22	40	19:17	22
3:23	40	19:23-24	17
3:26	40	20:22	42n
3:27-30	41	20:31	33
3:29	41		
3:30	40	Acts	
3:31	33	1	54
3:31-33	41	11:3	173
3:31-36	40, 41	18:4	69n, 70n
3:32	42	18:4-5	68
3:34	41, 43	18:7	70, 70n
3:35-36	41	18:13	69
4:23	171	18:14a	69
6	31, 36, 38, 43-47	25:19	69n
6:1-15	43		
6:16-25	43	Romans	
6:26-29	43	6	73
6:26-40	43	12	3-4, 74, 75, 81, 85
6:27	43	12:1	79
6:29	43	12:1-2	76
6:30-35	43	12:3	79
6:31	43	12:6	81
6:32	44	12-13	75, 77
6:33	44	12:3-8	73n, 77
6:35	44	12:9	75n, 77, 78, 65
6:36-40	44	12:9-13	78
6:38	44	12:9-19	77
6:40	46	12:9-21	75n, 76, 77
6:41-58	43	12:11-12	77
6:44	44, 46	12:13	85
6:44-46	44, 45, 46, 47	12:14	78, 85
6:45	44	12:15	78, 83
6:46	44	12:16	76, 78
6:47	44, 45, 46	12:17	76, 85
6:50	45	12:17-19	78, 85
6:51	45	12:17-21	82
6:52	45	12:18	85
6:53	45	12:19	76, 76n, 78
6:54	45, 46	12:19-20	78
6:55-58	45	12:20	76, 78n, 85
6:58	45	12:21	76, 78, 85
6:59	43, 43n	13:1-7	73n, 77
6:60	45	13:11-14	76
6:60-71	43		
6:61	45	1 Corinthians	
6:62	47	2:8	149
6:62-63	33, 45, 46, 47	4:7	81
6:62-64	46	5	110n
6:63	47	6	110n

7 94n, 108, 110n, 123

7:3-5 122

7:8 123

7:9 123

7:14 109

7:16 87, 109

7:25-28 108

7:25-34 88

7:27 123

7:29 124

7:29-31 108

7:32-34 108, 124

7:33 108

7:34 108

7:39 123

8:10 71

11:3 121

11:3-7 117

11:23-26 14

11:27 174n

12 73n

12:27 110n

12:23 46

13:13 110n

15:3-7 14

15:58 79n

16:13-14 79

2 Corinthians

12:2 149

12:2-3 149

12:4 149

12:7-9 149

13:11 79

Galatians

3:28 117

5:19-23 79

5:21-25 117

Ephesians

3:17-19 110n

5:1-2 110n

5:21-25 121

5:21-6:9 113n

5:22-23 110n

5:25 109

Philippians

1:21 110n

2:5-8 81, 82

3:7-8 110n

4:4-6 79

4:8 79n

Colossians

3:11 117

3:12 79n

3:14 79n

3:18-4:1 113n, 117, 121

1 Thessalonians

4 94n

4:173 79

4:3-6 78

4:11 81

5:2 170n

5:4 170n

6:2 73

6:6 73

6:11 73

2 Thessalonians

1 Timothy

2:8-15 113n

2:9 117n

3:4ff. 123

6:1-2 113n

Titus

2:1-10 113n

2:2 121

2:3-5 117, 120

2:4-6 121

2:12 121

Hebrews

10:30 76n

James

5:9 172

1 Peter

2:17-3:9 113n

3:1-2 117n

3:1-4 117n

3:6 117n

2 Peter

3:10 170n

Revelation

1:3 174

1:13 168

1:17-20 167

2-3 167

2:14 178

2:20 178

3:3	170n	12	151
3:4-22	167	15-16	147n
3:7-13	168n	16:15	167
3:8	168n	19:9	173, 174
3:19	175, 176	22:12-13	167
3:20	8-9, 167-8	22:16	167